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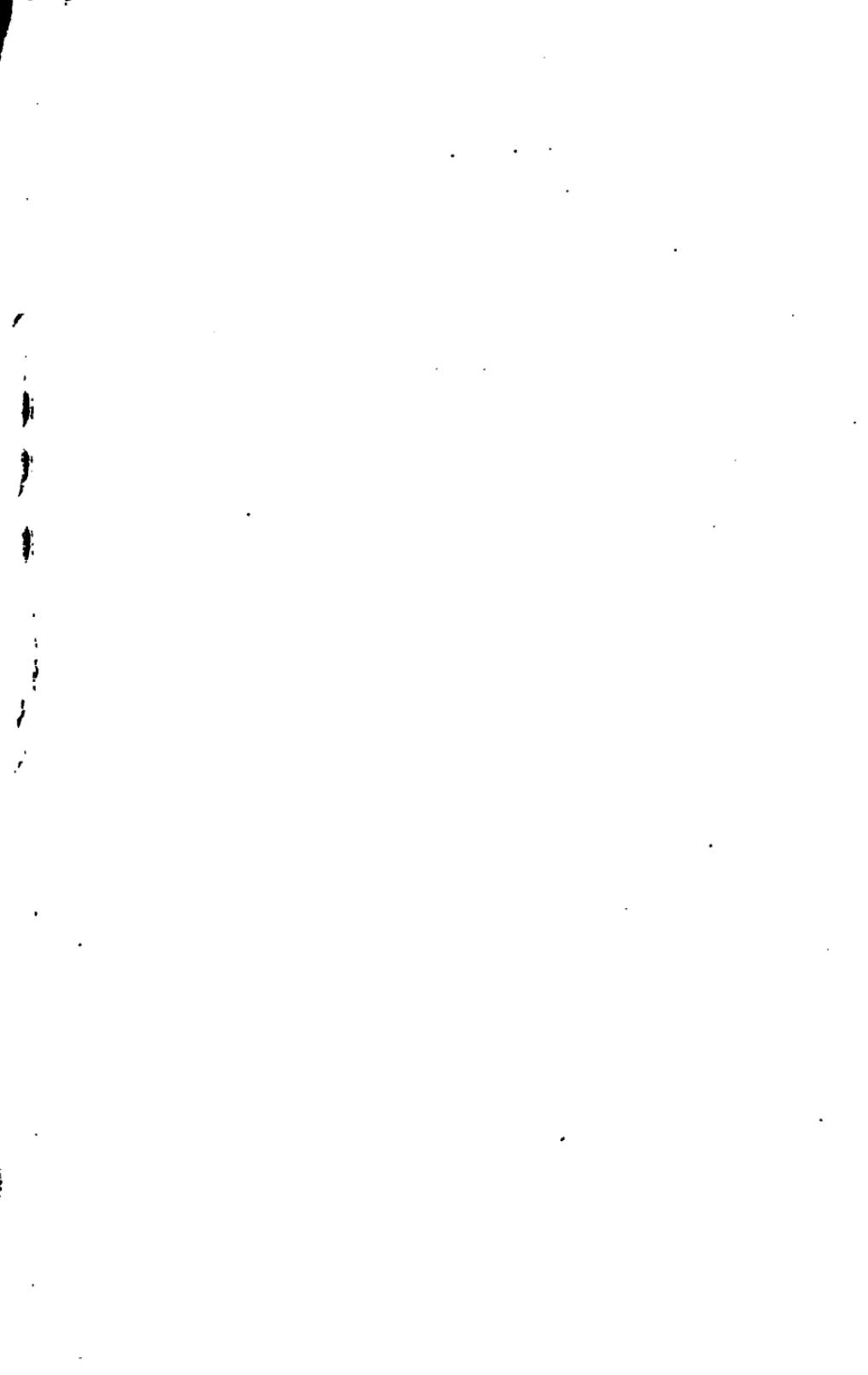
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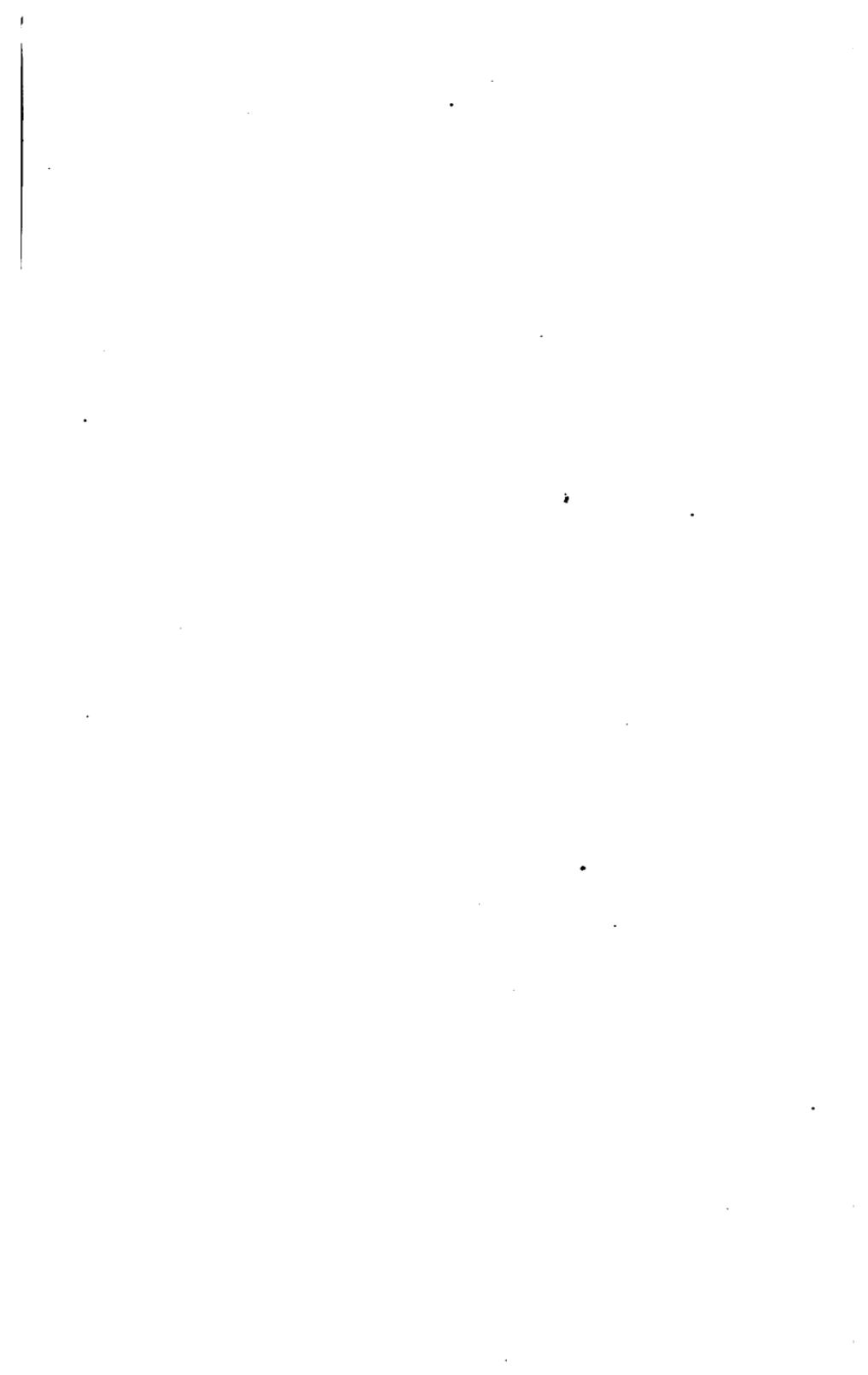
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ADA GREVILLE.

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VOL. III.



A D A G R E V I L L E;

OR,

WOMAN'S CONSTANCY



BY PETER LEICESTER, ESQ.,

AUTHOR OF

“ARTHUR OF BRITTANY,” “BOSWORTH FIELD,” &c.

—Her love once given,
Woman gives life, gives hope, gives heaven.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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ADA GREVILLE;

OR,

WOMAN'S CONSTANCY.

CHAPTER I.

He look'd upon the wave—so calm, so fair
It seem'd—no tempest rage was surely there,
Nor peril near—oh, false security !
His hopes to trust upon a treach'rous sea.
The storm burst forth, the wind swept by,
And with it bore that doom'd one's dying cry.

It will be necessary for the prosecution of our story, to give a brief outline of the political state of the Affghan capital, at the time of which we are writing.

The country itself is one to which great interest attaches in a variety of ways. The widely-believed tradition of its containing the veritable garden of Eden, where our first parents

brought blight and death into a world, till then perfect in beauty and blessedness: the almost certainty of its having been inhabited by the ancient patriarchs, more than one of whose tombs are still shown: the alleged tradition, too, of its having furnished the first King of Israel, in the person of Saul, the son of Kish, who is claimed to have been a native of Affghanistan; and truly, although the claim may not be fully conceded, there is evidence enough of former connection between the nations, in the strong Jewish cast of the Affghan countenance, as also in some of the traits of character which still maintain.

Here, too, did the great Macedonian conqueror bring his arms; when, stayed by the river Indus, he vainly boasted that he had conquered the world, and placing his trophy there,—the beautiful and classic column above Cabool, where it still remains, in its green old age, to test the truth, he marched back dispirited.

Here, too, in far later times, was one of the largest empires established the world has seen, under the famous Sultan Mahmoud, who, plant-

ing his capital at Candahar, ruled an extent of country extending from the Tigris to the Eu-phrates, only to crumble from its ephemeral greatness to decay, when the forming hand was cold.

Here, too, was found, through the gorges in the impassable barriers by which it is on three sides surrounded, a ready way—the only path, indeed, from Persia and its neighbouring king-doms on the west, and from the Tartan hordes to the north, by which their many invasions on Hindostan were for centuries made; and which attached to its geographical position an import-ance, which neither its teeming valleys, nor the scarcely yet tested riches of its mountains could have given it.

Broken up into a variety of small governments, each chief almost independent of his sovereign, and too often ready to assert his supremacy; with a wild, uneducated, lawless people, strong in their resentments, and unrestrained in their wills, save by the stronger despotism that pro-fessed to rule them; changes of dynasty, and the superadded evils of irregular succession, had

kept the whole land in a state of disorganization, which, offering little or no security for life or property, had made the law of the land that of force, each individual the judge and avenger of individual wrong.

On the death of the former King Zemaun, who, after a short and turbulent reign, had been cruelly murdered, his brother, the Shah Sujah, assumed to be his rightful successor, and took upon himself the regal power; his actual dominion, however, was only the government of Mulk, for his half-brother, Mahmoud, opposed him at Cabool, as did also the hereditary Vizier, Futtah Khan; and they succeeded in establishing there a joint government, to his utter seclusion.

Mahmoud, however, becoming jealous of the superior influence of his co-regnant, had speedily procured his assassination, vainly hoping thereby to secure to himself the individual rule.

The Vizier, however, had many brothers, all appointed to various governments, bold and active men; no sooner did they learn their brother's fate, than they rose against the usurper,

seized their respective governments, and set them up as so many kingdoms.

Of these, Dost Mahommed, a crafty, daring chief, established himself in the capital, and seemed to defy all attempts to unseat him.

The Shah had, however, appealed to the English Government, proposed to hold his kingdom at their dictation, and prayed their interference.

For a time, he was pensioned from the Indian treasury; until, in the sequel—not perhaps so much from any regard to the justice of his claim, as that the Indian Executive were desirous to have possession of the strongholds, of which Cabool was one of the principal, by which a dreaded invasion from Russia could alone be effected—an expedition was ordered into the country to restore the rightful King to his dominions.

The splendid progress made by Lord Keane, in 1839, will be fresh in the memory of our readers; it was, indeed, much in the style of the mighty conquerors of old, who marched through a country, and deemed it conquered; for the

fame of the English arms was omnipotent, and barely was wanted their actual use.

The people, however, were not conquered, but only for the time subdued. The Shah was nominally placed on the throne; insufficient garrisons were left in the country, and the victorious army passed on to receive the rewards and honours of a conquest.

But it was soon found that the serpent was only scotched, not killed; quickly recovering from their first terrors, the turbulent chiefs appeared, from time to time, to reassert their previous rule; and it was at once evident that the work had yet to be done; that, so far, the English power had no real authority in the land.

Fresh troops were accordingly dispatched into the country, the growing spirit of anarchy was checked, and a degree of tranquillity established, to which the kingdom had been long a stranger.

It was, however, but a deceitful calm; the elements of discord were rife enough, and it but wanted the torch to light the conflagration up.

Nor was this long wanting. Akbar Khan, the second son of the deposed ruler, had systematically refused all surrender of his assumed rights ; he had always betrayed the most bitter animosity against the English, and had openly vowed to rid his country of them by every means in his power. It was in the autumn of the year 1841, that he appeared among the neighbouring Giljyes, exciting them to rebellion, and plotting against the government.

Several smaller outbreaks had been already put down ; but there was soon the evidence of a powerful combination, which asked the most prompt and energetic measures.

Unfortunately, the whole history of the disasters which followed, is one successive page of undue confidence, vacillation, and inaction, such as no other in our country's annals can equal.

It was not for want of sufficient caution that the catastrophe occurred ; for, even two months before the outbreak, Sir Henry Pottinger had gone expressly to Cabool, to warn the Envoy of the coming storm ; and many of the subordinate officers had already pointed out its too certain

evidences ; but, unfortunately, the command of the troops had been assigned to a man, who, however estimable in all the relations of life, and experienced for his office by long service in the Peninsular wars, was incapacitated by illness for the arduous duties which thus suddenly devolved upon him. Long sensible of his unfitness for his post, he had already solicited his return, and which the sudden rebellion alone prevented.

The personal bravery and high principle of General Elphinstone is everywhere admitted ; and there can be little doubt that the immense responsibilities thus unexpectedly attaching to him, at a time when his physical ability had failed, in a manner, paralyzed his energies, and made him afraid to act—casting him away from his own judgment, upon the varying and conflicting opinions of those about him.

Thus it was that an insurrection of a few truculent chiefs, which might, at its onset, by a display of promptitude and vigour, have readily been put down, was suffered to grow in strength, until it had accomplished the destruction of armies.

Perhaps the most deplorable fault was that of placing any faith in the lawless and treacherous people with whom they had to do. But then, perhaps there is not on record in the annals of crime, any similar instance of such base, such diabolical treachery, as that which these wretched people, to their eternal infamy, were guilty of.

Think of a man inveigling another to a conference, under the plea of friendship, to devise measures of concord and peace; accepting his valuable presents at one moment, and the next, with the very gift he had but then received, murdering his unarmed, unsuspecting guest, in cold blood!

No chronicle, of even the most barbarous and uncivilized nation, can equal the atrocity of such a deed.

All, indeed, was as bad as it well could be. A large army, clogged with camp-followers, that perplexed and paralyzed its movements, doubling the necessary provision, which had oftentimes to be furnished at the risk and cost of life; and cramping their march most fearfully.

Encamped upon a plain, surrounded on almost

every side by forts and strong points of offence, their very commissariat beyond the cantonment, actually within the enemy's fortifications ; uncertain, vacillating councils ; desponding, despairing forces ; the directing mind of the whole almost imbecile from infirmity ; an enraged and blood-thirsty enemy crowding around, snatching at every opportunity of molesting them ; and, more fearful than all, a cold winter, like a devouring monster, stalking onward, to add to their accumulated horrors : it is not to be wondered at, that the wonted energies and resources of a British soldier succumbed before the host of perils by which he was there confronted.

It was about the last week in October that Akbar Khan was known to be at Cabool, actively employed in exciting a spirit of resistance against the English ; and to his influence had been referred very much of that insatiable rancour, which, as a lighted firebrand, unyieldingly pursued them.

Events were pressed forward from that time : bold, imperious, cruel—the very personification of that spirit, which has made the Affghan name

to signify the destroyer. Well did he justify the appellation !

Withheld by no one feeling of remorse ; stimulated by a rabid virulence of hate, that knew no limit in its thirst of blood ; and with all the hollow, devilish treachery of his nation in its freest activity ; he was just the man to follow up the slightest success, advantage by the errors or imbecility of his foes, and turn every engine to their destruction.

Such was the man, who, mainly influenced the destinies of the doomed troops, now shut up amid the rocky boundaries of the land : by whose means was consummated the fearful tragedy which ensued.

It would appear that the withdrawal of General Sale's troops from Cabool, which took place about the middle of October, and which very materially weakened the English forces, gave great confidence to the rebel schemes. More open signs of personal dislike to the English were shown ; officers were purposely insulted, nay, even attempts made to murder them ; various disturbances took place in the city, of too decided a character to be

passed over as mere broils, as they were found always to the detriment of the Feringhees, or Europeans.

But still was no alarm taken. Confident in the good faith of the chiefs, and of their own strength, all symptoms of the storm, or warnings of its coming, were still disregarded by those to whom the care of that mass of human life was committed.

At length the storm rushed on. An order was produced, bearing the King Shah Sujah's signature, commanding the immediate destruction of the Feringhees. It probably was but a forgery, though there were those who believed otherwise; but it answered the purpose sought. The chiefs met, and endeavoured to rouse the ignitable feelings of the people to act upon it; their own revenge being, at the same time, raised to the highest pitch by an artful declaration of Akbar Khan's, that the English designed to seize them all, and send them prisoners to England—a disposal at which the stoutest heart among them quailed.

Akbar, indeed, had seconded his representa-

tion by coming privately to confirm it ; and it was on his going to the conference, that Ada met him on her way to visit Mrs. Prudhoe, of which we have already spoken.

The next day, the storm burst forth. There was a general rising in Cabool : the houses of such of the officers as were living in the city were attacked, many burnt, the stores plundered ; and Sir Alexander Burnes, who, in his false security, had omitted his practicable defence, was basely murdered, together with every man, woman, and child, found within his house.

In place, however, of at once quelling the tumult, and avenging the slaughtered officers by prompt and efficient measures, scarcely anything was done. The rebels were permitted to exult in their outrage ; were taught to believe that the forbearance of the troops arose from a sense of weakness and incapacity ; that they dared not punish the murderous violence : thousands flocked to the meagre band who had first commenced the insurrection, and rebellion stalked

about with giant tread, no power of the British commanders could stay.

The history of the two following months was one detail of outrage and massacre ; of futile, too often inefficient efforts to retrieve the past ; of the abandonment of advantages still left ; each day marked by some cold-blooded murder, some horrible treachery ; their foes daily increasing in numbers and ferocity ; their own strength wasting as much by disease as the casualty of actual fight ; the winter pressing on, and despair pressing them down ; little wonder that they should yet cling to the only prospect of deliverance that seemed left to them, though that rested on the professions of a perfidious foe.

Even when the Envoy, Sir William McNaugh-ten, and his brother officers were so savagely butchered—Sir William, by Akbar Khan's own hand, with the very pistols which he had only a few moments before presented to the ruffian, still was the miscreant borne with, treated with, trusted.

And there can be little doubt that it was

owing to the many delays and difficulties which he caused to their march, when, after depending on his purchased assistance, the troops set out on that fatal retreat, that a chief part, if not all the subsequent horrors are to be referred.

He had again and again sworn that not one of them should escape—why should it be doubted that he would fulfil his oath ?

Had the troops hurried forward at once, even clogged as they were with their mass of followers, that fatal worker of most of the mischief!—think of a whole army being detained for hours in a fearful pass, with death and destruction around them, that a lost child might be recovered ! had they but pressed on at once, thousands, in all probability, would have been saved, who became the victims of the intense cold, in which they were delayed. Five miles only would have cleared them of the snow, and yet, within that brief deliverance, thousands perished.

To the native troops, indeed, wholly unaccustomed to such a climate, the cold was a more

fell destroyer than the sword—they literally lay down in hundreds to die.

And in one short week from their leaving Cabool, the whole army was annihilated.

But we are anticipating our story.

CHAPTER II.

He hovers in the air; his doomed prey,
Entangled in his wiles, before him lay;
No power to meet, no feint to ward the blow,
With one wild swoop, he darts and lays him low.

OUR story returns to Howard Smythe, at the time when Ada had so indignantly rejected him.

Nothing could exceed his disquiet when he came to know his own feelings. His love for Ada had indeed been dormant, from its believed impossibility. He had not one moment's idea, poor as he himself was, to take a wife equally poor. With his carelessness of expense, and his too liberal notions of contenting many wayward fancies, he would as soon have

thought of marrying his grandmother, as any woman who might introduce him to such acquaintance as Dame Poverty ; and, fancying such a contingency to attach to Ada, he had, as a matter of necessity, endeavoured to dispel her image from his mind, and, careless of his heart's pleadings, abandoned himself to utter recklessness.

He had, in truth, made love to more than one fair one ; had really, and indeed, proposed to Edith James—not from one iota of attachment, but merely as an arrangement of convenience ; that, since his heart's affections might never find their rest, his mere worldly position might be advanced, and he released from that state of dependence, which obliged him so much to stoop to the dictation of others.

But still he grieved for Ada's loss—still grieved for her love—how could it be otherwise ? What man could dream a dream of such sweet delight, and not sigh at the awakening ? And often, in his wanderings, had he thought of her, till his heart throbbed with anguish ; had often gazed wistfully on some bright star, that shone upon his mid-

night march, and deemed it was she that looked on him, and cheered him with her smile—that smile so well remembered ! And then, as the reality came back, and he saw himself separated from her—it might be, for ever—in a foreign land, amid the wilds of eternal deserts, and the wilderness in his own heart, then he did indeed sigh, and know too sensibly what it was to have lost the love of one so well, so dearly worth the loving.

He well knew that he was beloved—his vanity had told him that ; but he had not guessed the extent, the intensity of Ada's love for him ; and when, after months of absence, and, in the changing scenes around him, and the varying duties of his now anxious position, he had scarcely opportunity to think of her ; she appeared before him in all her former beauty, declaring her devotedness, not so much by words, as by the proof she gave of it by her presence there ; the dormant feeling sprung into activity, and, but for his first astonishment and his perplexity, he would, at the instant, have greeted her with her own enthusiastic warmth.

It was this surprise, and the presence of Mrs. Prudhoe, who, he well knew, would not spare him, that occasioned Howard's apparent coldness, and roused the indignant feelings of a wounded—of a crushed heart. Nor, even when he saw the committed offence, could he throw off the moment's restraint, and assume the more grateful expression, which, as a joyous sunbeam, would have lighted on her heart with ecstasy.

Oh ! the infirmity of our evil tempers ! He was piqued at her too quick, too sudden condemnation, although he knew and felt that his manner towards her had called it forth ; and, sooner than yield, he would let the barb rankle in her heart, would risk his happiness on the peril of her resentment.

But when she turned to leave him—to leave him in her wrath and indignation—the full burst of his attachment rushed to his heart ; he knew, he saw that was no time to conciliate, explain, to be forgiven ; and, ere the malkee had passed away, he had determined to seek an instant interview, to repair the mischief which that unlucky meeting had made.

He learnt where she was located, and would at once have followed her, that her injurious thoughts might have a brief dismissal ; but his military duties called him away till a late hour, —too late to think of seeking an interview that day.

But no other thought had been in his mind ; his heart had freely acknowledged the generous, devoted affection, which had led Ada away from home and peace, to wander through fearful perils for his sake ; and he had been a worthless, despicable wretch, not to have warmed before such a proof of her love.

He could not sleep that night for thinking of her ; indeed, there was an unsettled, uncertain feeling in the camp, that kept many awake ; many strange reports were in circulation, and there was a general expectation of some outbreak.

Howard, however, thought little of that ; but he did think how ungenerous his conduct had been—how ungrateful ; he did think that he had trifled with his best welfare, and he determined to spare no pains to remedy his mistake.

He thought, too, that he might make a better confession ; a more clear, more calm explanation of his conduct, by a previous note ; and, no sooner had the idea occurred to him, than he was busily inditing a letter, opening his whole soul to her, acknowledging his apparent coldness, explaining its occasion, professing his unchanged, his ardent love ; in fact, such a letter, so full of warm assurance and devoted vows, that it would have taken a much sterner heart than Ada's, and a far more inexorable resentment, to have rejected its appeal.

It was his first care, as the daylight came, to send the note by a safe and trusty hand. How often did he bless the moment which had suggested such a course !

That morning did the insurrection break fiercely out ; his very messenger, who first brought the tidings, native as he was, had barely time to get away, before the storm burst forth. That day was Sir Alexander Burnes murdered ; other officers' houses attacked : there was a general rising of the chiefs ; the British army was driven to their cantonment almost in

a state of siege, and a succession of perils ensued, that pressed too vitally on the notice of each individual officer, to permit of any care, save that of the fearfully responsible duties which thronged upon him.

Well might Howard bless the thought which had so well timed the expression of his feelings, for it was his last opportunity.

That very evening was he sent off with despatches to General Sale, at Gundamuk, recalling his troops to Cabool ; and a very perilous service it was, even to deliver his despatches ; to bring back the General's reply had nearly cost him his life. Struck down by one of the murderous Giljyes, had it not been for the friendly guide, who rescued and succoured him until he was able again to move about, he had been like many thousands whose unburied carcasses were left to taint the air of that savage land. Assisted by the same helping hand, a large reward indeed depended on his safe return, he had, in the disguise of an Affghan peasant, passed through the perils of his return, and nearly six weeks after his departure, again reached the cantonment, as

one risen from the dead. Indeed, his convoy on the mission, and who had already brought the General's verbal answer, had reported him as slain.

But what a change he found in the state of affairs. The British troops pent up in their narrow and most ill-situated cantonment, exposed on every side to attack ; their outer posts lost ; the very commissariat fort, on which the subsistence of the army depended, abandoned ; themselves reduced in numbers, dispirited, despairing, paralyzed. Their enemies triumphant, exulting, mad with past success, thirsting for fresh blood : daily crowding around them in fearfully increasing numbers ; urged on by their own vindictive feelings, and the fanaticism of their synods, to the boldest assassination ; not a day passed but some fatal tragedy was announced ; not a day, that the lowering atmosphere around them, did not gloom with some even more fearful omen.

Such was not a time to think of love, there was scarcely gleam of life enough to see through the despair around him ; it would have been

insanity to have sought any communication with Ada then. And yet, at whatever cost, he determined to know that she was safe, that she had forgiven him ; was even now devising some plan for effecting his object, when, the evening after his return, he observed a Moorman servant standing in the opening of his tent. The man no sooner saw that he was observed, than, making the usual prostration, he advanced nearer to him, and placed in his hands a very crumpled note. Howard saw it was Ada's writing ; he hastily opened it, and read its contents : they were very brief :

“ You are forgiven, but seek me not now ; your own safety as well as mine depend on your forbearance. Let the bearer of this remain near you, he can be trusted unto death.—ADA.”

“ When had you this note, my man ? ” he impatiently asked.

“ Much long than month,” the man replied, in the usual indistinct jargon, “ since Missie done send it.”

“ Have you seen the lady since ? ”

"No, Sirdar," he promptly replied. "I wait for master."

"Can it be done now?" Howard quickly asked: "can you, by any contrivance, see the lady?"

"No, no," he said, unhesitatingly, "bring Missie danger—kill Sudeeq. Missie said Sudeeq no come back, stay with Sirdar."

"And are you sure the lady is safe?" Howard asked, anxiously, "safe since you quitted her?"

"Oh yes, Sirdar, she Ramasamy's wife—"

"Ramasamy, the devil!" Howard exclaimed, in no measured accents: "what do you mean?"

"They tell her Ramasamy's wife," the man repeated with no small surprise on his countenance, "they tell Sudeeq so."

"What! the lady who sent this note?" and Howard held it before him, "she, the wife of an Affghan!"

"Ramasamy tell so, Ramasamy daughter tell same," he looked very dubious: "they may sometimes tell lie."

"Impossible!" Howard exclaimed, in a very

impetuous tone, "imposaible!" he read the note again, "they do tell lies—cursed lies. I'd as soon believe she was the wife of the Great Mogul—pooh! pooh! they make a fool of you, Sudeeq."

"They tell so, however," the man doggedly answered; "and Sudeeq saw them plenty kind."

"The devil you did!" Howard was even less assured; "and what does it all mean? No, no, it is impossible," and yet he wished it had never been spoken; "and I am to take the charge of you, Sudeeq—eh?"

"So Missie tell, very anxious tell; Sudeeq plenty bold, can help Sirdar, if he done come hurt."

"Well, Sudeeq, I cannot refuse the lady's wish;" and Howard took the particulars of his new body-guard; "so you must e'en constitute my domestic establishment, as I find my poor Sepoy is among the slain; and for the sake of her who sent you, I will give you my confidence; but mind, Sudeeq, if an opening offers to convey any note to the lady, you do not fail to secure it;

indeed it shall be your duty to watch for one."

"No, master, no," Sudeeq said, earnestly, "most sad hurt to Missie: Sirdar must be content."

"Mind what I say, Sudeeq—of course we must take care of the lady's safety." Howard mused for a few moments, "I have a fancy it can be done, that you can do it safely; mind what I say," he briefly prepared a note, thanking her for her forgiveness, shortly detailing his adventures and his safe return; and giving it to Sudeeq, said to him, "a purse of ten rupees if this be safely delivered and an answer brought to me—I will trust the means to your ingenuity."

Sudeeq shook his head, but he took the note, and left the tent. And Howard felt quite content that his wish would be fulfilled.

He had already reported his return and his recovery at head-quarters, and the next morning found him actively engaged, one of many officers, in endeavouring to keep at bay the aggression of their enemies, who, like a pack of hungry wolves,

though driven back again and again, still rushed to the attack with a daring which no efforts could repel. Day after day, hour after hour, everywhere, at every assailable point, was the assault made by hordes, almost incalculable in numbers, almost indescribable in their untiring, ever-waking activity of annoyance; there was no rest or peace, no intermission of duty, no pause in the awful drama that was enacting around them.

Driven from all their outer defences, exposed on every side to the murderous fire of the foe, almost every attempt to relieve their position had miserably failed; and, feeling themselves almost at the mercy of their enemies, they attempted to purchase their safety on any terms they might dictate to them.

In the midst of the negotiations for such object, was the Envoy, Sir William McNaughten, barbarously murdered; and it shows the utter prostration of the spirit of the army, that, although committed within a quarter of a mile from the cantonment, under the very eyes of the Commander, no vengeance was attempted, nor even a single demonstration made to evidence

the horror, the indignation which that treacherous deed had called forth.

If, indeed, there was one man whose spirit rose more indignantly than another to revenge the murder, or had more gladly sacrificed his life to have saved it, that man was Howard Smythe, whose very soul seemed to loathe the enactment of so foul an outrage, as an utter disgrace to his species.

To few, indeed, did he stand second in personal bravery and indomitable daring; and he had vainly entreated to be one of many, if but to rescue the mangled body from farther indignity. He saw, indeed, nor was he the only one of many who saw it, that the incapacity of their commanders was leading the remnant of the troops, with the thousands depending on them for safety, into a fearful destruction; and when, a few days afterwards, commenced that ill-fated retreat, begun, continued and consummated by treachery—treachery the most flagitious, the most insatiable—he was one of many who deplored, denounced that perilous measure; foresaw, predicted its result.

Such, at least, were not times for the gentler affairs of love. Howard's soul was too much stimulated with horror and disgust—too much excited by the fearful nature of his duties, to do more than *think* of her he loved—that he did, again and again, as the weary watches of the night kept him waking, and the more weary marches which followed, left him no other bright thought on which he might think.

Sudeeq, indeed, had failed to deliver his note, reiterating his former statements, especially as to the danger to Ada of attaching any suspicion of her country, in the existing intensity of hate, in which everything English was held; and, but for the strange assertion, regarding the existing relations between her and her host, he would have been entirely reconciled to leave her in her present security, until his own fate had been decided; but, stung to the quick by the very hint of such a possibility as Ramasamy's having supplanted him, he determined, at any risk, to seek an interview, although he felt that almost any disposal of her was better than exposure to the fearful horrors which so surely pressed upon

himself: how he succeeded, has yet to be told.

Well might he congratulate himself on Ada's being so safely protected, when, on the fatal morning that commenced their retreat, he saw the multitudes of starving wretches, by whom the now small band was to be clogged; with scarcely any commissariat stores; the sick and wounded, women and children, in all the stages of human infirmity, mixed pell mell together, and, in their terror and dismay, breaking through every possible order of march; hunger and thirst; a cold and piercing wind; the ground covered inches deep with snow; their route now up the precipitous ascent, then through rocky defiles, where sometimes their only path was over the frozen waters of some mountain stream; and now through rapid rivers, which had to be crossed and recrossed oftentimes during the day; the whole body attacked, before and behind, by a blood-thirsty enemy, who, crowding the mountain heights, fired on them from above, rolled immense stones on them, or, whenever opportunities offered, dashed into the pent-up mass,

and hewed to pieces such as came in their way : from morn to night a savage foe like this ; at night, the sterner frost, like a desolating angel, mowing them down in thousands. Howard might well be content that Ada was spared a frightful ordeal such as this.

It was in that sad and terrible hour that Howard found great and incalculable benefits from Sudeeq's services : the man had insisted on accompanying him in the retreat, declared he had a vow not to part from him until he was in safety, and had already managed to make himself so useful, that Howard was little inclined to part with him.

The man wore a Chuprassie belt and badge, which seemed to refer him to some official situation ; he, however, denied the fact, refused all account of himself, beyond simply that it was the Missie's pleasure he was obeying, and that one thought seemed all-powerful, beyond all sense of hardship—all fear of danger.

There evidently was some mystery about the man ; though plainly a native Hindoo, there was an energy about him, a decision of character,

unlike their wonted apathy ; and, what was even stranger, while his countrymen were sinking in thousands before the frost, it scarcely seemed to touch him, as if he was hardened against its fiercest power.

Howard, however, was too indifferent to all but present suffering, to care much for any minor considerations ; the man was useful, was most attentive, and had resources too, oftentimes of sensible benefit.

Thus, on their first night's stoppage, when the mere cold destroyed thousands and disabled more, he persuaded his master to lie down on the cleared ground, with some of his men feet to feet ; until, forming a circle, he covered them up with all the garments he could collect, thus keeping together an extent of heat that saved their limbs from being frost-bitten, and gave them much refreshing sleep.

And when Howard's imperfectly healed wound gave way under the extremity of the cold, his ready wit found means, even in the midst of the bustle and terror around them, to mitigate the pains, and arrest the progress of the hurt.

Whenever, indeed, peril was to be met, or difficulty surmounted, Sudeeq was always at his master's side, always ready to assist and succour him; and he did it, too, with a singleness of purpose, and hearty good-will that, under any circumstances, would have secured his master's favour, did, under the very trying ones of their present position, win his cordial regard.

CHAPTER III.

The rav'ning wolves press on, they crowd around,
Where'er the merest access can be found—
Forward they spring—

IT was after their third night's stoppage, when, as yet, they had barely advanced a dozen miles, that Howard woke from his short and troubled sleep to renewed misery.

They had, the night before, reached Khoord Cabool, when the snow again began to fall heavily, and it had fallen all the night: and, while to him and his party, through the means they had again taken to protect themselves, it proved almost a defence from the bitter, piercing wind, to thousands and thousands it had proved destruction.

One loud, wailing cry burst on his ear, as he awoke to consciousness, and told its withering tale in all its horrors. It was barely twilight ; he roused Sudeeq, who lay by him : he could not rise without assistance, by reason of his wound, and, getting to his feet, gazed fearfully round.

The pass was literally choked with the bodies of the victims to that night's frightful cold : they had perished in thousands ; and, of the rest, the still living, more were in agonies of pain from its direful effects. Numbers had sought the hollow caves, all for shelter, many to die : there was not strength to put the dead ones forth ; the living, the dying, the dead lay promiscuously together.

Some were crying out for pain ; some for hunger ; some for thirst ; many for very distraction. Children, women, men—ay ! the grown man cried out as an infant would have done ! Some were insane with horror ; one man laughed ; he sprung from the ground as Howard passed, and fell down dead at his feet.

Here mothers—ay ! and tender mothers, too

—unable any longer to hear their children's cry, unable any more to see them suffer, and know that there was no remedy, no prospect but a briefly-delayed death, snatched them from their milkless breasts, and dashed them on the ground.

One old crone confronted Howard as he passed along, and demanded food; her son was perishing for hunger; for three whole days there had not been any; it was in vain he told her all were suffering alike: she called him murderer, cursed him by her God, and rushed frantically by.

Here were men cutting up the dead and dying horses; eating the flesh as they tore it out; some drinking the blood. There, was a man writhing in torturing pain; his feet had been frost-bitten; had mortified; he could not rise; there was no one to aid him—aid him! when all wanted aid? aid him, dying man that he was! when death confronted thousands in the face? he knew it, even while he cried for help—knew there was none—and all he asked was mercy, for some pitying hand to dash out his brains.

But Howard's notices were promptly engrossed by another object : his friend, Currie, was hurrying past in a state of wild distraction.

Currie was a young lieutenant, who had joined his regiment at the same time Howard had, and circumstances had thrown them much together. He had but recently married, and, like the other married officers, had brought his wife on that ill-fated service.

"Good God ! Howard," he said, wildly, "what shall I do ? I have taken the infant from Charlotte, that she might have an hour's sleep, and it is dead : I think, indeed, it was dead when she gave it me, for it was as cold as death, and it has never stirred since. Good God ! good God ! I can never face the mother ; it will destroy her—I know it will," and he looked with an anxious, fearful look at the lifeless little creature, that lay within the folds of his cloak : "dead, dead !"

"Perhaps it only wants a little warmth, Currie," Howard said, encouragingly, "and it will revive."

"And where is warmth to be got for it ?" he

fiercely asked, “ and this biting frost congealing one’s very heart’s blood ? And the mother—oh, God ! spare her from this blow !” the gushing tears, forced out by anguish, choked his utterance ! He turned away, ashamed to think his friend might see his weakness.

“ Come, come,” Howard said, soothingly, “ do not give this way, Currie, to your sadness ; it will be yours to comfort and console the mother’s grief.”

“ I dare not tell her,” he said, wildly ; “ it was her first, her only child ; her very soul clung to it, as its idolatry.”

“ Shall I see her for you ?” Howard asked.

“ No, no, I dare not that,” he forcibly restrained his excitement ; “ indeed, she is already more dead than alive ; any sudden shock would be her destruction.”

A ball whizzed closely by them. It was now broad daylight, and this the first salutation of their greedy foe. The ruffian Giljyes had already taken their posts on the surrounding rocks, determined to give no needless respite.

“ Curse on the bloody miscreants !” Howard

cried out. "Oh, that we might freely meet them on any equal terms; but pent up thus—'tis death to linger here;" and, taking his friend's arm, they hurried back to their station in the centre.

A private came seeking Currie; his wife was calling distractedly for him: how pale he looked! how the brave man trembled, as he thought of the trial thus pressing upon him!

Howard accompanied him; indeed, he seemed too much confused and distracted to have gone alone. His poor wife was standing in the opening of the crowded tent—they had but four in the whole army, of which the ladies had two; the other two ill sufficing for the sick.

"Charles, Charles," she said, almost reproachfully, "why have you been so long away? My child will be perished."

"Be calm, Charlotte," the husband said; but there was a huskiness in his voice, as if it choked him, that quickly caught her eager notice.

"What is the matter, Charles?" she asked, wildly; she felt there were other fears than those for a child: "are *you*, too, hurt?"

"No, no, my love," he said, earnestly; "indeed I am untouched."

"Give me the child," she spoke impatiently, waiting but to know that the husband was safe: "give it me, Charles."

"I fear it is cold, Charlotte," he said, in a trembling voice; "that it is fainting with cold."

The mother's quick feeling read the truth: to see the wild, hysterick look, which glared on him, as, starting forward to where her husband stood, she strove to snatch the infant from his arms.

"Give it me," she again said, "or I shall curse you!"

But he drew away:

"You alarm me, Charlotte, by this agitation. Compose yourself, and you shall know."

"It is dead," she said, wildly; "the monsters have destroyed it!"

"No, no, my love," his voice could scarcely be heard for agitation; "it is not hurt."

"But it is dead!" she fixed such a look of horror on him; "thou knowest, Charles, it is

dead : and is my infant, too, a sacrifice to these blood-hounds ? No, no, you do but mock me. Give me my child !”

She sprang forward to snatch the infant from his arms, when that same moment a musket-ball struck her on the temple, and she fell down dead.

“ Gracious God !” the frantic husband called out, wildly, “ can such things be ?”

He saw the exulting fiend—such the miscreant seemed, who had done the deed ; he madly drew his sword, and, clambering up the cliff to where the villain stood, vainly sought to reach him. A moment after, another ball from the same unerring juzail, pierced his heart, and his lifeless body tumbled down almost to their feet.

A score of guns sought to avenge the cruel deed ; small satisfaction to know the miscreant did not live to tell of his butchery.

And they laid the murdered bodies side by side, and the little infant between them. Howard saw that done : what more could he do ? Alas ! how fruitless that, when, within the hour, the greedy

plunderers would intermingle them with the slaughtered thousands !

But that was not a time for sympathy ; horror, and massacre, and death, claimed each moment's space. It was enough to care for the living—think of the dead, indeed, save but to envy them their release ? No, no—there was indeed no time for aught so idle !

The full daylight had come, and, in despite of all orders and all control, the desperate mass in advance moved on, and had already gained a mile's distance from the camp, when a fresh message from the Affghan chiefs compelled them to return ; and thus again was farther delay occasioned, when their only hope of deliverance was by a prompt clearance of the defiles.

Akbar Khan had sent, proposing that the officers' wives, and other ladies in the camp, should be placed under his protection, and thus saved from the farther horrors of the march.

At first, one burst of loud, indignant denial met the offer. What ! trust a treacherous villain, like that ? His hands scarcely dry from

the blood of the unfortunate Envoy; and to whose intense hate their sufferings were mainly to be attributed?

There were those among the officers who vowed they would sooner shoot their wives than submit them to such a doubtful fate. But when they came to think more calmly of the matter, and saw the terrible sufferings they were enduring—cold and famished, and scarcely clad; many with young infants; some daily expecting more; and without any hope of mitigating their misery: when they saw, even, did they escape the merciless fire of the foe, to which they were each hour exposed, that it was physically impossible they could contend with a continual exposure to such intense cold and deprivations, they felt constrained to submit, though it was perfect horror to submit to the proposal; for they felt that it might probably be yielding them to outrage, to worse suffering than even death itself: and it was with a heavy heart, indeed, that they left the camp. It was with a sad foreboding of the future, that the officers, who accompanied

them—husbands and others, disabled from wounds—bade adieu to their brothers in arms. It was, indeed, a last adieu ; and yet how different was their respective fates to what their then fears had foreshadowed them.

Those who committed themselves to that doubtful protection were saved—all were saved. Those, from whom to part was considered as an abandonment of safety, were lost—all were lost!—*all!* save one solitary man !

Howard had nigh been included in the number of those who thus delivered themselves up ; his wound had broken out afresh, and he was too much disabled to be fit for any effectual service. An offer had been made by Akbar Khan to include the sick officers in the list ; but, before the offer could be properly promulgated, the party had moved onward.

God only knows what the miscreant really meant by this show of humanity. He had, so far, hovered round the retreating army, had foiled their progress more than once, and had miserably failed to supply those stores which he

had covenanted for, and the want of which, he knew, had been the destruction of thousands : his own hand had murdered, most treacherously, most foully murdered, the confiding Envoy. It was known he had sworn, again and again, to rid his country of the cursed Feringhees ; and if his object, then, was one that sought not the destruction of those who committed themselves to his keeping, it was a problem no human skill can solve.

It might be, that a kind Providence ruled the purposes of the wicked man to unintended mercy—a mercy which he himself found not, when the same treachery which, he dealt to others, was dealt upon himself, to his miserable destruction.

Another night of horror, and of widely-spread death, followed that fatal day ; but it was nothing to what was yet to come.

Their march on the morrow had but well commenced, when they plunged into a fearful pass, the projecting sides of which were found lined with their ever-watchful foe ; who, as the dense mass came on, poured volley after volley into

the throng with most fatal effect. The road was choked with the dead bodies ; the camp-followers, in a state of mortal terror, rushing as a mighty, ungovernable sea, first to one point, and then another, neutralized any efforts the troops might have made to oppose the foe. All was confusion and dismay : the oldest veteran yielded to the feebleness, the hopelessness of that trying hour.

Encouraged by the evident disorder and confusion which their slaughtering fire had caused, the ruthless Giljyes rushed from the heights on the panic-stricken mass, and hewed them down in promiscuous massacre.

It was in vain that the officers attempted to stay the panic, to restore order, to rally the troops ; the native Sepoys had thrown down their arms, and sought safety in flight ; some had deserted. Of the English troops, few were left : the officers themselves were singled out, and many paid the forfeit of their lives ; indeed, scarcely one-tenth of the crowd, who had, four days before, quitted Cabool, passed through that fatal onslaught.

How Howard escaped, he never perfectly knew ; he was in the thickest of the fight, and, disabled as he was, had borne the very brunt of it ; but he knew that, wherever he was, in whatever danger, however extreme his peril, there, by his side, was Sudeeq constantly to be seen, as if he had been his guardian angel. Surely he had a charmed life ! for he came scathless through the conflict. Again and again he had struck down some murderous blow from his master's head ; and more than once borne him up, when the crowding mass would have trampled him to death.

Among the many Giljye chiefs, one had been especially noticed by the British officers. He was a remarkably fine-looking man, of a bold and lordly carriage ; his dress was more splendid than the others, and, had not a marked deference, so evidently paid to him, declared it, his general appearance and bearing would have bespoken him to be no lightly esteemed chief among them.

He was ever foremost in the fray ; led and withdrew their various attacks, as if at pleasure ;

and many a daring deed had he done, which, in a more regular warfare, would scarcely have failed to elicit the admiration of his antagonists.

They had named him the Blue Chief, as he wore his under-tunic of a bright blue cloth, and his towering turban was of a similar colour.

On that fearful day, the Blue Chief was especially prominent: in every attack was he to be seen, leading and encouraging the hordes to their bloody work. More than once had he singled out some one of the officers; and, as if he claimed the right to cut them down, had dealt unerring death upon them.

Twice had he confronted Howard, as, like a withering pestilence, he passed along, the very crowds falling before his reeking sword; but though Howard were an easy sacrifice, again and again had he passed him by, his very followers seeming to maintain the same avoidance of him.

Howard was wild with excitement: he saw his friends, his men, hewed, and hacked, and struck down in that promiscuous carnage: he cared not for life; from such a scene of horrors

he scarcely wished to escape. He thought to die —to sell his life dearly; and, watching his opportunity, as the Blue Chief again came near him, he sought to rid the fight of his fatal influence by one mad effort. He rushed to meet him, fired his last remaining pistol at his breast —but it missed its mark; the chief's quick eye had seen his purpose, and sprang aside: Howard closed on him with his eager sword, sought to foil his evident avoidance of him, and was dashing forward to strike him; when—oh, the phrenzy of that moment! some one rushed on him from behind, clung to him with an iron grasp, and fell with him to the ground.

He had but a moment's consciousness to see that it was Sudeeq, who had thus foiled his aim; when he was struck violently on the head, and fell back senseless.

CHAPTER IV.

The very stones cry out, for shame ! for shame !
To slight so pure, so generous a flame.
Well may it rise indignant at the blow,
That seems to revel in its overthrow ;
And curse the selfishness, whose withering touch
Turns to dismay whate'er it chance may clutch.

WE left Ada, on her quitting Mrs. Prudhoe's tent, towering with indignation at Howard's coldness; wild with resentment, before which her crushed affections asked not to be heard. To think that he, who had gained her first, her only love; for whom, trusting to his ardent vows and warm protestations of devotion, she had abandoned parent, home, country, and been a wanderer on the wild world, reckless of peril,

careless of sympathy ; and the one—the only one bright spot to cheer her on—it were, indeed, as a glimpse of Paradise, where all dear thoughts were to be consummated!—to think that he should have so lightly held his vows ; have thought so meanly of her love ; nay, even have forgotten her !—was it not enough to rouse the meekest spirit upon earth, much less a quick, an ardent one like hers ?

She could that moment almost have cursed him for his cold-hearted, calculating spirit. Poor Ada ! she had refused all previous teaching ; rejected all warning ; and her first real experience how base man's heart can really be, was to find herself slighted by him who was as an universe of bliss to her.

And was this—*could* this really be the recompense of all her trials and her perils ? Was this the good to which she had looked forward—had yearned—had sighed for, with that intensity of expectation ? Alas ! alas ! such blighted hopes are an every-day occurrence in a world, which makes of selfishness a household god, before which all minor claims fall down and worship !

It was, indeed, a question that her heart responded to, even as she put it: such *was* her recompense.

And when her first excitement had passed away, her indignation ceased, and she could feel the cruel blight which had come upon her, then was her spirit crushed indeed.

For hours after her return to her host's, now her only refuge, were her thoughts in one wild storm of conflicting emotions; and the night—oh, it was a sad, a wretched one! as, restless and sleepless, she tried in vain to think of some mitigation of her anguish—to propose to herself some course for the future.

In the latter inquiry, indeed, she had so far arrived at a decision, as to resolve upon immediately quitting that unsettled, lawless country, so soon as Ramasamy should think it possible to conduct her. She was yet impressed with the thought of it, when her Ayah brought her Howard's note, which he had, most fortunately for any hope of forgiveness, that same night written to her, and which his trusty messenger had not failed to deliver at the earliest dawn.

It was most penitential as to the past, devoted as to the present, full of protestations as to the future. Alas! it was but the old tale again! But it was also full of explanations, so manly, so candid, so very satisfactory. Ada read them again and again: each time did her indignation grow cooler and cooler; her resentment subside, her love plead for extenuation. And the morning was still young, when the forbearing, forgiving woman within her, had reinstated her lover in her favour; and the past, with its troubles and its doubts, was no more remembered in the renewed promises of the future.

She could not bear to keep him in suspense: it was too great a happiness to hold any communication with him. She at once wrote him a note, full of kind feelings, with the assurance of her forgiveness, and her desire that he should seek her speedily, to receive assurance of her pardon from her own lips.

That note, however, never reached him. She had sent it by Newbery, who, finding that Howard had, only a brief hour before, departed

with his despatches, had, in his great zeal for Ada's wishes, promptly followed after him through the excited rebels, and was horror-struck to meet and find himself recognized by one of his Bohkara tormentors. The ruffian had fired at him, and given instant chase; but Newbery was more than a match with him in agility, and succeeded in making good his retreat to Ramasamy's domicile, where he arrived in a state of fearful terror, his face white as a corpse, and the thick drops running down his cheeks, almost in a stream. It was long before he could recover himself; and when he did, he was such a changed man; his spirit bowed to the dust; abject with fear. And, what was even worse than his present recognition, there was a strong suspicion that he had been tracked; and Ramasamy, who knew that it would be destruction to himself and family to be discovered harbouring any of the hated English, was timid and uneasy at his continuing in his house.

"Done tell it would be," he said, very gravely, shaking his portentous head; "Missie would send."

"I must send, my good Ramasamy," Ada said; "I could not have found another messenger."

"Done tell it would be," he repeated, "trouble bring Ramasamy, they kill him, kill Missie too, and so end great law case."

"What shall we do, Ramasamy?" Ada asked, anxiously; "I would not be peril to you."

"Him go way," Ramasamy promptly answered, "they done see him, and will find him; kill all Ramasamy's people and his goods burn."

"And *where* should he go, Ramasamy?" Ada asked.

"Go? go to campment, go to own countrymen: safe there."

"Perhaps you are right," Ada said, though sorry to lose his good offices. "I should never forgive myself, did I bring him into trouble."

"Good Missie," Ramasamy said, assentingly; "and let him go now—very day."

"It shall be so," Ada said, musingly, "he shall go at dusk."

"Good Missie, very good Missie," and the old man took himself off quite content.

Ada grieved to think of losing Newbery's care and protection, and which, more contentingly than Golab's, had become almost essential to her comfort. There was companionship in the one ; true and valid counsel, intellectual conversation ; and it was something, in her separation from society and kindred—her banishment from her country, and all its dear household associations, to have one congenial spirit near her. Every other consideration, however, was sacrificed to that of his personal safety; and that very evening did Newbery depart, taking with him a note to Mrs. Prudhoe, explaining who he was, and the nature of Ada's interest in him ; requesting for the sake of all, he might be retained in the cantonment. Ada felt the deprivation very sensibly, but there was no avoidance of it ; it threw her back on her own resources, which were anything but effectual for her relief, and she was compelled to remain quietly till the stirring events around her and Howard's return, would change the monotony of her present seclusion.

Of course, her mind was full of anxiety for

his safety ; she heard enough of the sanguinary nature of the conflict going on, and of the avowed determination to rid the country of its invaders, to be at all content when, among them, her own lover was included. She knew that Howard had gone with vitally important and at the same time perilous despatches ; and she looked anxiously to learn some tidings of his safety, which would surely reach her through Newbery and Golab's intervention.

She was much amused with the sentiments and proceedings of her young hostess in the matter of her love ; Zulmanie indeed had no thought, no mind, no tongue but for her lover and his praises ; it was the beginning, the end, the burthen of every interview they had ; and surely, if Zulmanie's judgment was worth anything at all, there never was such an Adonis of a man.

Ada had soon learnt that Runjeet was one of the principal leaders of the insurrection ; wild, impetuous, brave ; that he was scarcely second to Akbar Khan in the virulence of his hate, and his

mortal vow of extirpation of the foe. Zulmanie, indeed, seemed as proud of him as a hero, as she was of his manly beauty; and Ada was constrained patiently to endure the constant infliction of her rhapsodies and eulogies, sensible that, under her present circumstances, it was scarcely to be avoided.

Zulmanie had not yet dared to tell her father of her love; she knew his great affection for her, and how entirely he believed that his child would never cast off the old tie. Simple dotard! even his ancient years had failed to tell how feebly it held, when the young, fresh feelings of an ardent heart like hers, were enchain'd by fond imaginings; and she had not the courage to break an illusion in which the old man seemed to revel so gratefully and contentedly.

It would seem, however, that the disclosure could not be long delayed. Runjeet was constantly with her, in that secret intercourse which prevails in the country, where a lover is accorded most of the privileges of marriage. They had taken every step within their power to pledge each

other, so that the father's authority might be inoperative to hinder their union: not omitting that common one, of Runjeet's cutting off a lock of her hair, and proclaiming her to be his wife, so that it would have been difficult for Ramasamy to circumvent them.

As might be supposed, Zulmanie was not very long in introducing the incomparable to Ada. And really a fine, noble-looking fellow he was, too, well worth the loving, with his long, black beard, and curled moustache, enough to set off a far less handsome face.

There was, too, amid the fierceness of an eye that told plainly enough what a devil inhabited him, a soft and loving look, like the gentle moon-beam through the storm, enough to win the heart of any maiden who looked on it. And he had also a ready wit, and an active imagination, that delighted in metaphor and beautiful fancies; and, though he could not speak one word of English, the intelligence of his manner almost made the dumb-show of his features as readily to be understood as if he had spoken his thoughts.

“This my Runjeet,” Zulmanie said, proudly;

"did I tell lie? is he not beautiful?" and she fondly patted him on the cheek.

Runjeet smiled; he seemed to know what she was saying, and replied, as Zulmanie interpreted it:

"Very silly girl; sees all rainbow-hues, that hide the dull, unsightly clouds behind them."

"Now, Runjeet," Zulmanie said, as she explained it to Ada, "don't you too much look at lady; is she not very pretty? there, that will do; I shall be jealous," and the little beauty pouted very considerably; Runjeet's admiration of Ada's beauty, indeed, was somewhat over-warm for a mistress exactly to like.

Nor was his exclamation less flattering, though Zulmanie repeated it in not her blisthest accents:

"Most exquisite lady! for such as you, I would forswear my countrymen, and almost love yours! Very gallant, truly, Runjeet," she finished by saying.

"Tell him I can return the compliment," Ada said to Zulmanie, "for really he is a

handsome fellow, and you ought to be proud of his love."

"And so Zulmanie is," she said, "very proud, but—Runjeet! Runjeet! that will do; the lady don't want your look—she have her Runjeet, too."

He looked still more fixedly, with such intense admiration, that Zulmanie began to be really mortified at her having brought him there, and plainly showed her vexation, too. She placed herself before Ada, so as to block his sight of her.

"Most beautiful, indeed!" she said, with a pouting lip. "Runjeet used to call Zulmanie beautiful."

Runjeet smiled at her pique; probably he was accustomed to it; he took hold of her chin, and, squeezing up her pretty lips till they pouted ten times more than they did before, fondly kissed them. It was all right; her lover's kisses seemed to have quite reassured her; she again looked contented.

He spoke earnestly to Zulmanie; he asked her if she had yet told her father of their love.

She dared not. Oh, folly! it must be done. She had not courage. The lover seemed displeased; he was tired of suspense—had other things to attend to—should be taken away for weeks—might see other pretty faces—not Rama-samy's wife. Zulmanie cried—cried very bitterly at the bare possibility of her Runjeet even thinking of other pretty women, and promised faithfully to do his bidding that very day.

And so ended the interview, which was one of considerable constraint to Ada, inasmuch as, beyond admiring the handsome lover, she could take little part in the scene. She had, from the moment she saw him, ceased to wonder at Zulmanie's passionate fondness for him: for he was almost as admirable, as an Affghan, as her own Howard was, as an Englishman, and as fond as he, in their fondest days.

A very few hours afterwards, Zulmanie came back bathed in tears. She had told her father of her attachment: how he had stormed and raged! every angry passion within him rising into turbulence. He had called her ungrateful, unnatural—had almost cursed her by his prophet;

he had driven her from his presence, and the poor girl was broken-hearted.

“Oh, lady!” she cried, piteously, “do English fathers do such cruel things? would lady’s own father been so hard-hearted?”

“Very likely,” Ada said, and sighed; “human nature is the same in all climates; and when fathers wish to choose for their daughters, or, as in your case, don’t wish them to choose at all, I fancy it is the same in England as elsewhere.”

“But would lady give way?” she asked, very earnestly; “if lady had a lover like my Runjeet, would she let father thwart her?”

“I am afraid not,” Ada said, in a very conscious tone; “I am afraid that English daughters would be not very much unlike a Ramasamy one.”

“I am so glad of that,” the young lady said, somewhat more blithely.

“Why, Zulmanie?”

“For lady feel for Zulmanie, will help her.”

“How can I do that, Zulmanie?” Ada

saw there was some rising purpose in her mind. "I suppose you do not mean to give Runjeet up?"

"Give Runjeet up!" she repeated the words so earnestly; "give my Runjeet up! I would as soon give up life—more soon do so than give up one single thought of him; his love to me is more far dear than all the world could offer."

"Then I conclude," Ada said, "that you wish me to speak to your father for you?"

"The same thing, lady—the same thing! Would lady?"

"Yes, Zulmanie, with pleasure; *when* shall I speak to him?"

"Not now, dear lady—not now; he too angry—too mad! see him to-morrow—he better to-morrow."

"Well, Zulmanie, to-morrow be it, and, till then, cheer up; depend on me, I will bring him round."

"Thanks—many, many thousand thanks!" and the poor girl wept more bitterly than ever.

Golab came to his mistress, as Zuhmanie quitted her.

"Ah, Missie," he said, "bad work ! such plenty bad work ! they beat troops everywhere ! take forts—take food fort !"

"It is very sad news, Golab."

"Plenty sad, indeed, Missie ; troops beaten to tents, and killing them plenty, Missie ; killing officers too—much glad one officer not there."

"But are you sure, Golab, that he is any better off ? Would that some tidings of him would arrive !"

"Master Newbery tell, they expect arrive every day."

"Where did you see Newbery, Golab ?"

"He done come out camp this noon ; great meeting, and plenty great talking among them and chiefs, and Master Newbery came with them to say something to Missie."

"Did you give him the small note, Golab ?"

"Surely, Missie, surely ; he done say that he will be sure to deliver it safely, as soon as Master comes back."

“Would to God he were back! Oh, this separation! what fearful anguish does it bring!—surely, if happiness is the sweeter for suffering, I ought to be very happy.”

“Oh yes, Missie be happy—Missie deserve to be very happy.”

Ada, indeed, did not quite understand her desert of happiness; but she surely felt the great price that happiness would cost her, *that*, at least, she could understand.

It was seldom now that she could gain any information from the British camp; for, the immense gathering of the different tribes from every quarter, stirred up by excitement and hate, to every outrage, that seemed to watch for every opportunity of thirst for blood, glutting its rage on every one that bore the taint of Englishman, made it very unsafe to hold any communication, however indirect, with the besieged cantonment; and all Ada could do, was to wait as patiently as she could for any chance tidings that might reach her; well knowing—she was right there—that Howard would only be too happy to make known his safety, instantly on his return; she

was confident he would find the means of doing so.

It was indeed an anxious waiting for her, and her unhappy countrymen, pent up, as if it were, among a pack of greedy wolves, gloating on their destruction. Each day brought some account of fresh disaster, fresh massacre, fresh horrors.

What was to be the end thereof?

CHAPTER V.

It was a jewel, rich as it was rare,
Such gem Galgrada's mines did never bear;
He kept it in a sacred store, and deem'd
No spoiler there could come—alas ! he dream'd.
Poor, fond old man ! to think such prize could be,
And from the spoiler ask immunity !

ADA did not forget her promise to Zulmanie. That very next morning did she seek an interview with the father. He came to her very sadly—so broken down—Ada could scarcely have thought the mental struggle of so brief a space could have wasted him so much.

He never once took his eyes from the floor; but asked, in a deep, hollow voice, as he came before her :

"Did Missie want Ramasamy? he very bad—would not have come to any one but Missie."

"Thank you, thank you, my kind friend!" Ada said, cheerfully; "I do want to speak with you about your daughter."

"Ramasamy have no daughter," he said, impatiently; "she that was daughter done cast off him—not now love him."

"Oh yes, yes, my good friend!" Ada spoke soothingly, "Zulmanie loves you very dearly; no parent could wish to be more loved."

"Not wish to be more loved!" he repeated the words almost fiercely; "could be *any* love so much as Ramasamy wish? He gave much—oh! so plenty much—done love his child more plenty than himself; and she have given up him—done put his love under foot."

"Indeed, good Ramasamy," Ada replied, "you deceive yourself very much; your child still loves you as tenderly as ever, although she finds some space in her heart for a lover."

“Oh, curse him! curse robber! who steals from me dearer than all my goods—the staff on which an old man done rested for his happiness—curse villain!” and the old man wept very sadly.

Ada strove to soothe him, and there was an earnestness in her manner, that interested his ancient heart:

“Cheer up, good Ramasamy; you will not lose your daughter; her love is still, and will be ever yours.”

“Curse robber!” Ramasamy seemed to have only the one thought—the wound was too deep: “Curse robber! She love me so! done never love but me.”

“Nor will her love change,” Ada said, “but it will still beat the same for you.”

“I have *all*!” he said, wildly; “never small bit of heart but Ramasamy there—would never have one beat but his—oh, curse robber!”

“But, my good friend,” Ada inquired, “if you will not allow a daughter’s love to graft on it a lover’s, how did you win the mother? did she not love *her* father?”

"Might do," he said, musingly; "perhaps Tolsee might. Ramasamy bought Tolsee."

"Ha! that certainly is some trifle against the sentiment," Ada said, smiling; "still, my good friend, would you not have been mortified, had Tolsee not loved you?"

"Ramasamy done tell Tolsee to plenty love him—Tolsee plenty obedient."

"And yet Tolsee loved her parents—you know, Ramasamy, that she did."

"Tolsee might; Ramasamy never know."

"Oh yes! love them and love Ramasamy same time—both very truly, very dearly.

"Ramasamy tell he don't know; he know he done love his child; he know he have no child now."

"Think better of it, my good friend; I know you like to please me: for my sake, think better of it, and consent to Zulmanie's attachment."

"Never!" he said, passionately, "never! Oh! curse robber! Would Missie do so? Had she father loved her?"

"I *have* a father, Ramasamy, a father who loves me as fondly as you can love Zulmanie, whose love I have prized beyond all other earthly good."

"Plenty good; but Missie never gave up her father? she love him, and cling to him."

"Alas, no! Ramasamy. I loved him indeed—God knows how fondly and dearly!—but the other love crept in, and, though I love my father still the same, that other love has separated me from him, and made me a wanderer o'er the wide world."

"Done Missie indeed so?" he asked, looking up with great astonishment.

"Yes, Ramasamy," Ada saw her advantage; "God himself implanted that other love in our affections; it is a law of universal nature: you see the offspring of every living thing forsaking its parent and forming its new ties: should Ramasamy be the only exception to the rule, and think to bar his child when her heart is so fondly given? no, no, Ramasamy would not be so very selfish!"

“Don’t know,” his tone was less determined; “Ramasamy would keep his child; she very, very dear! and when she lost—”

“She will not be lost, my friend,” Ada said, quickly; “by your consenting, you will gain even dearer love—will make her love beyond all limit.”

“Done Missie father not like to part with Missie?”

“Indeed no, quite as objecting as Ramasamy could be.”

“And Missie really run away—really leave him?”

“Yes, Ramasamy,” she said it sadly enough, “I must plead guilty.”

“Perhaps Zulmanie may run away too?”

“Depend on it, she will never be happy if you deny her; and all her smiles, and bright looks, the very beauty on which you delight to dwell, will pass into sadness and decay.”

“Ramasamy love Zulmanie, she so very pretty child; he would not like Zulmanie one bit less pretty.”

“Then give her your consent, good Ramasamy;

and, in place of sadness, you will see even brighter smiles—see her beauty even more lovely. Besides, my friend, you will get a very desirable son-in-law, a man abounding in natural advantages, and, from his position, likely to do credit to the relationship."

"Him robber!" he could not restrain his wrath.

"No, no, Ramasamy," Ada said, earnestly; "he will not rob you, he will rather increase your happiness by making Zulmanie happy; look at her now, pale, and weeping, and heart-broken, then think of her enthusiastic love to the kind father who makes her so happy."

"Ramasamy would like Zulmanie to be happy," he said, thoughtfully; "would not like bit less pretty."

"Then consent, my good friend; and, in addition to every other consideration, I will esteem it a very great favour done to myself, and will be more your advocate than ever in the law ease."

"Missie sure she have power with Cauzee?"

"Quite sure he will do anything he can to

pleasure me; of course your case is a good one?"

"Good case!" it seemed strange to Ramasamy that a question of its goodness could ever have occurred to her mind; "good! I give my good goods, and never done seen my money—good! him villain wont pay; but Cauzee can make him—good!"

"I am sure, my friend the judge will make him; and but grant me my request, Ramasamy, and you will find I shall not be wanting in gratitude."

"If Ramasamy did consent, Zulmanie would not want to leave him *soon*? her too young—her not fourteen years old—not leave him yet?"

Ada saw he was yielding, much as he understated his daughter's age:

"What do you mean by *yet*, Ramasamy?"

"Two—one year, at least; not want to leave him in one year?"

"That is a long time for lovers to wait, Ramasamy; but suppose we say nothing as to the time, merely that you consent? What a

beautiful couple they will be ! Say you consent, good Ramasamy !—it were a shame to separate them.”

“ Well, well !” it was a very unwilling assent after all ; “ I must not have Zulmanie one bit less pretty, and Missie make Cauzee make pay ?”

“ Certainly, everything in my power.”

“ And Zulmanie not to leave Ramasamy for one year ?”

“ No, if you still persist, on further reflection.”

“ Ramasamy persist in twice longer time on reflection.”

“ No, no, that will never do ! make it as much shorter as you please ; and, with that reserve, you consent ?”

“ Suppose Ramasamy must ; he have no choice.”

“ It is all for your happiness, my good friend ; indeed you will find it so.”

“ Ramasamy cannot see the happy things ; he can see he lose daughter—but he have no choice.”

“You will ever bless the day, Ramasamy.”

“He don’t know—may be so—he don’t know,” and the tear stood in the old man’s eye; it was, indeed, a fearful sacrifice to him: he might well linger to consent, ere the word was forced from him; “Ramasamy very, very sad.”

“Nay, nay,” Ada said, cheerfully, “let us send for Zulmanie, and her joy and gratitude shall assure your heart of its having done well.”

“No—not now!” he quickly exclaimed, “not now—Ramasamy could not bear more; he very sad; he must let his thoughts grow to his loss—not now,” and he very sorrowfully withdrew from the apartment.

Zulmanie was not far off; she knew of the interview, and had been waiting, in all the horrors of suspense, for its result.

Her father had scarcely quitted Ada, than she knocked timidly at the door, and, scarcely waiting for her summons to enter, rushed into the room, and threw herself at her feet. She did not dare to ask her fate, but, hiding her face in

Ada's lap, seemed almost afraid lest it should be spoken.

"Look up, dear Zulmanie," Ada said, kindly ; "all is well."

"May I believe it?" she still did not dare to raise her head. "Do I, indeed, hear aright?"

"Yes, Zulmanie, I have gained your father's consent."

"Heaven bless you, lady!" she said, fervently ; "beam bright joys into your own bosom, and bring *your* Runjeet safely to your love."

"But wait, Zulmanie. Before you wish me too many good things, first know to what extent I have secured your wishes."

"Extent, lady? Did you not say you had gained his consent?"

"Yes, Zulmanie, fully so; if you can only be content to wait a whole year."

"Runjeet wait a year! My Runjeet live without his Zulmanie one whole year? You never promised that, lady?"

"Not I, indeed; I promised nothing."

"Runjeet not wait a bit—Zulmanie not wait a bit—but, oh! never mind that, lady; soon

bring father round, soon coax him to more consent. How Runjeet will love lady!"

"Indeed, Zulmanie? And what will *she* say, if he does?"

"I don't mean that, lady: I mean grateful love—thanks."

"I understand. Well, well, I am glad I have succeeded; but if Runjeet really feels obliged to me, let him influence his brother chiefs to deal with more faith to my countrymen."

"Zulmanie not understand that: Runjeet won't tell—won't let Zulmanie ask."

"But Zulmanie can tell him what I say?"

"Oh! most truly; and Runjeet *ought* to do everything lady asks; indeed, I will not love him, if he does not so."

There seemed every probability that Zulmanie had succeeded in talking her father to more satisfactory terms; for it was only the next day that Ramasamy again sought Ada, in far lighter spirits and blither looks.

"Ramasamy think better of Runjeet," he said, very importantly; "he brave fellow, and

very handsome man ; and most handsome couple will they be.”

“ I am glad to find you have come round to my way of thinking,” Ada said, quietly.

“ Yes, Ramasamy had no will. Zulmanie still love him ; and perhaps he may consent less than year.”

“ I am glad to hear that.”

“ But this it is : Ramasamy want to go his long journey—to go as soon as Missie can be ready to let him.”

“ I should be grieved to be a clog upon your plans, my good friend.”

“ Ramasamy make his plans quite like Missie’s; only when she ready, he go long journey, and take Zulmanie with him for six, nine months,” the old man chuckled at his management ; “ may be *more* than nine months ; but don’t Missie tell.”

“ No, indeed, not I ; but what does Zulmanie say ?”

“ She plenty content to the *six* months,” and he looked very knowing ; “ but if great law case

keep Ramasamy, it keep Zulmanie, too : she could not get back alone ; only Missie can do like things."

And the old man left her, evidently quite content with himself and her management.

Small content, though, with Ada, whose position, already irksome enough, was rendered doubly so by her host's desire to proceed on his journey, stimulated, no doubt, by his confident anticipations of the successful issue of his suit. But until Howard returned, she was virtually without a plan for her future movements ; and though a month or five weeks had passed since he had gone, yet no tidings of him had arrived. She knew not, indeed, that tidings *had* come : God had tempered the wind to the shorn lamb : the fatal report had never reached her—that would have been a blow indeed ! and should the retreat of the British troops, now so anxiously talked of, take place before his return, her position would be one even more painful and difficult.

It was about this time, that the murder of the Envoy had given such a decided character to the struggle ; and showed, too evidently to be mis-

taken, the extreme treachery of the foe with whom the British troops had to contend. True, it was a deed, of which its very perpetrators were ashamed, trying to shift its responsibility from one to another. Even Ramasamy, with all his bigotry against the invaders of his country, blushed to hear it named—denounced its enactors as ruffian murderers.

But an example such as this, among a wild, impetuous people, who, after a long season of coerced submission, had then begun to feel their strength, had given rise to an emulation in the slaughter of their foes; that it would have been as easy to have dammed up the river's flood, when once its banks have burst, as have checked the intense desire for blood to which they had abandoned themselves.

Ada knew all this. Golab, from day to day, brought her sufficient glimmerings of passing events, to show her, plainly enough, the extreme peril in which her countrymen were placed; and she trembled to think that he, on whom her hopes depended, was one of the doomed band, even ha no worse fate already overtaken him.

But day still followed day, and brought no tidings ; and it was scarcely now possible to gain access to the British camp. It would have been instant death to hold communication with it ; and there was a watchful, untiring, unsleeping vigilance among the lawless hordes, who crowded round it, that made the risk no speculative one.

But still the days passed unsatisfactorily by ; and Ada, racked by apprehensions, knew not one moment's peace, was scarcely able to bear up under the suspense—when one evening, within a day or two of Sir William McNaughten's murder, Golab came very mysteriously to her, and whispered in her ear, although there was no possible chance of any eaves-dropper being near :

“ Missie, Missie, one old woman from camp.”

“ Ha !” she thought instantly it was some message from Howard : she knew no trifling errand would have brought any one from thence.

“ Bring her to me instantly.”

CHAPTER VI.

Burst was the shell, a gorgeous butterfly
Rose in its bright, its glorious brilliancy ;
And, like a seraph thing, to her pleas'd sight,
Seem'd as the messenger of fond delight—
To herald her to bliss.

GOLAB had soon introduced the applicant, one of the Affghan women in appearance, closely hooded in the head-gear of the country ; an old lame creature, bent almost double by age or infirmity ; and yet the eye, which peeped through the opening of the hood, seemed not to lack fire.

Ada, however, had little opportunity of observation : the stranger had scarcely appeared before her, than, impatiently motioning for Go-

lab's dismissal, she barely waited for the closing of the door, than approaching nearer to Ada, the hood and outer cloak were at once thrown aside, and Howard Smythe stood before her.

The ecstasy of that moment ! With an ill-repressed scream of delight, Ada rushed into his arms, and clung to his long and lingering embrace, as if even yet she feared to believe the reality of her joy.

It was as if—no, no !—description would but mar it : what joy could be more joyous ?

“ My own sweet Ada !” at length her lover said ; “ heaven bless you for this greeting !”

“ And do I indeed clasp you, Howard ?” the rapturous look which accompanied her words ! “ indeed I dare scarcely believe my very senses ; are you indeed well ? you look pale—”

“ I have been wounded, my Ada—badly wounded, but I am better—well now !”

“ I fear not very well ; but how came you here ? have you not incurred a fearful risk—oh ! why have you disregarded the caution I gave you and thus rushed upon peril ?”

“ To see my Ada, to take the assurance of

forgiveness from her own lips ; enough to make one brave any peril for such a greeting as this."

"Ah ! talk not idly."

"But indeed, Ada, I do not run the risk you fancy, my disguise is ample, and I have an abettor in the work that ensures my safety ; think not of that, my beloved ; I would not debar myself one dear smile, after my long and fearful absence—I had, in truth, rather have died than not seen you."

"Alas, I tremble for your safety."

"No, no, I am safe enough, my love ; what little risk there is, must needs be borne ; in three days now, the troops commence their retreat from Cabool, and it would have been very distraction to have departed without arranging my Ada's plans, and knowing she was safe."

"To depart ? May I not accompany you, dearest Howard ? Surely Mrs. Prudhoe would protect me ?"

"Can she protect herself, Ada ? can she be sure that the clouds which lower so ominously round us, will not sweep away her power to succour ? No, no, my love, I thank God, that

you are in such an asylum as this, that you are not exposed to the hardships and perils which surely await us all."

"And must *you* be one, Howard? you are wounded; cannot you stay behind, on sick leave, for instance? I can insure your protection and care!"

"Impossible! would I might even consider it for a moment! 'twould be dishonour, disgrace—Ada would not that?"

"Dishonour—and Howard Smythe!" how proudly she looked on him! "the thing were too incongruous to be thought of."

"No, no, I must protect my men as well as I can for duty's sake, myself for my own beloved Ada's sake—the rest is with God."

"You are right, my Howard, I feel there is no option; God Almighty protect you! but run not needless risks: remember Ada's life depends upon yours."

"I will remember all fond and lovely thoughts, my Ada, your love shall be a talisman to keep my safety; and, so far as duty gives me power, I will take heed. I'll think of thee,

dearest, as delight and joy—the blessed reward of anxious toils: and I will pray to the God of battles, for thy dear sake, to bring me scathless through the strife.”

“And I?”

“Seek your return to India as soon as safety will permit: the sooner the better, so surely that it is without danger. Would that I could aid you!”

“There, at least, you need not trouble yourself, Howard; my kind host, is journeying in a few days to India; only waits my other disposal of myself before he sets out.”

“Ramasamy’s wife, indeed!” said Howard to himself—“How fortunate,” he continued, “join him by all means; his care insures your safety; hurry him from this cursed land: and having reached Bombay, wait there, my love, for my joining you; which, if kind Fortune suffer me, shall not be long.”

“And must I, indeed, again part from you?”

“Not for long, my Ada, a mere fortnight or three weeks; as soon as the regiment is safe in quarters, I leave at once and rejoin you.”

“Ah! surely does a prophetic spirit tell me, if I quit you, we may never meet again! there is a bad feeling abroad, Howard; revenge and hate stalk upon your path; and Howard, may—”

“Nay, nay! this will never do, my Ada; a soldier counts not on peril; he looks but to success and victory.”

“But peril will come. Oh, would to God that Howard were not a soldier; that this need were not to part us more.”

“Nor shall it be more than this, my Ada; so soon as I can honourably quit the service, for thy dear sake and my own better peace, I do it. My views, my position, indeed, are changed; I have just heard, since my return to camp of my brother’s death, and as the successor to our ancient title, shall now have an ample income and a station, which, graced by so fair and loving a partner, will leave me nothing more to wish for.”

“Is it indeed so, Howard? and shall you love poor Ada as well as—yes! yes! you do—you will; it were ungenerous to doubt it.”

“It were worse, my Ada ; it were unjust, unkind. Does not my being here assure my love ?”

“Yes, yes, Howard ! and were you still with me, the thought had never birth ; but you are leaving me—oh ! what a pang is in the thought ! Say you will always love me, Howard ; will never change—again.”

“I never *have* changed, Ada.”

“Edith James would say you had.”

“Edith James could not say so. She could say I offered her my hand—I admit I did : I believed I never might indulge my heart’s fond wishes ; and careless of any future, I sought the mere advantage her fortune might give me ; but I never loved her—did not profess to love her. I did not—could not love any one, but my own adorable Ada.”

“Speak it again, Howard ! once more, that my ears may bless the glorious voice that speaks such assurance !”

“Did I speak it a thousand times, dear Ada, I could not add to the truth of my assurance. Love you, indeed ! and you so worthy to be

loved—so worthy in your beauty—so altogether worthy in your devotion and constancy? I were a reprobate, indeed, not to love you. I frankly admit my fault, but I have redeemed it. When I left England, I believed that our union was impossible. I came away for a long, very uncertain period—it might be for life: and I never dreamt of again seeing you. I had no option in that I did, but that of beggary, which my soul rejected as dishonour. Is it wonder, then, that I should try to banish you from my thoughts? so far as Ada was concerned, can she blame me in that I did?"

"No, indeed, dearest Howard; Ada blames you in nothing. When she listens to that much-loved voice, she has no other thought but yours and content."

"But listen, still; when again you stood before me, with the proof, in your very presence there, of a love, surpassing all my deserts, beautiful in its sentiment, unmatched in its devotion; there was a recoil in my heart that cast away all other thoughts, and after the first overpowering astonishment, knit my very soul in closer bonds

than ever I had known—*intenser*, perhaps, were a more proper term ; the dormant love shook off his lethargy, and sprung forth in all his restless activity.”

“Indeed, Howard, I thought it not ; I believed myself rejected ; thought never to have seen you more.”

“It was your anger, dearest, that added to the error ; but let that pass ;—before I could rectify the mistake, I went suddenly off with despatches to General Sale, and wounded on my return, had to wait many, many weary days in a mountain hut, for my tardy recovery. God knows I had little to divert my thoughts, had I wished it. But they were all my Ada’s—*all* ; surely, I had deemed it very sacrilege to let any meaner thing intrude among the many lovely ones that peopled my brain. And when I reflected on the proof of her love for me, and tried to realize all she must have undergone for the sake of that love—the toils, the fears, the perils—my very soul worshipped her : the idea of being the object of such love, that I could be deemed a sufficient recompense for it, filled my soul with

an admiration beyond the telling, and wrote on my heart, dear Ada's name as its unchangeable destiny."

"I am well content, Howard; wish nothing more, but the impossible avoidance of our farther separation. I have you here. I know that now my fond heart beats against thine; but dare not think, once parted, when we may meet again; and surely is my life wrapped up in yours."

"Cheer up, my own blessed one, all will soon be well. Give not way to one sad thought when love smiles so gratefully on us."

"What heed his smile, if sorrow intervenes, that so we see him not?"

"The heed will be to cheer us to more hopeful measures. Come, come, my Ada, cheer up; dispel every dark fear, and let the expectation of future joy be comfort to your heart."

"I will try, Howard; I had need follow where such loved, such glorious accents lead me; where the reward—"

Her words were stayed: Zulmanie rushed suddenly into the room, hand-and-hand with Runjeet, whom she had brought for the double pur-

pose of tendering his thanks for Ada's successful mediation, as to show his handsome person in the beautiful new blue tunic and turban which she had worked for him. She started quickly back on perceiving how Ada was engaged ; then, guessing how it was, went close to her, and whispered in her ear :

“ *Your* Runjeet very handsome one too !”

The two men gazed at each other with a stern and fixed look ; — it was evident they had met before — but widely different was the character of their individual gaze. The Affghan's look was stern in its hate and bitterness ; and there was plainly a cowering before the other's eye, as if his boldest courage could not brook its withering scorn ; while the other's was stern in its wrath, and in the disdain which scarcely bore the presence of one he so much despised.

Zulmanie broke the ominous silence : appearing not to observe the disquiet in their lovers, she took Runjeet's arm, and leading him before Ada, spoke for him :

“ Runjeet, very, very obliged to lady for

great kindness. Runjeet will go to the farthest spot on earth to pleasure her—will never forget her goodness."

"You know, Zulmanie," Ada said, frankly, "that I have done it willingly, heartily ; but if Runjeet really feels grateful, let it be in forbearance to my countrymen ; in advocating a truer faith towards them than so far has been shown."

"Yes, indeed, he shall. Runjeet," and she spoke earnestly to him for some moments. "He will do anything—everything in his power to make peace, and he wishes your Runjeet to think so."

There was a smile of deeper scorn on Howard's countenance, but only Ada saw it; and he spoke not.

"Most of all," Ada continued, "should he watch the safety of him who is as dear to me as Runjeet can be to Zulmanie."

Zulmanie had scarcely repeated Ada's words to her lover, than he spoke in earnest warmth, evidently appealing to his God, for the truth of that he said.

"My Runjeet says," Zulmanie so interpreted his words, "that, so sure as the prophet is good and great, the Sirdar's safety shall be sacred; his own breast would shield him from harm. He calls great Allah to witness the truth of his words."

Again Howard smiled scornfully, and again Runjeet spoke, with even greater earnestness, as Zulmanie said :

"He wished her chief would yield his scornful look, and bid him peace be with you. May it not be so, Sirdar?" she asked, addressing Howard, who stood, as an unconscious listener might have done, till thus directly appealed to. "Take my Runjeet's hand, and give the sign of fellowship."

She took her lover's unresisting hand, and leading him near to where Howard stood, would have placed it in his; but Howard drew proudly up, he folded his arms across his breast, and turned himself away.

"Never!" was his brief reply.

To see how the blood mantled to the Affghan's brow, as the conflicting passions rioted within him!

“ Does he reject me !” such were his words, as repeated by Zulmanie. “ But there is a cause—a sad, sad cause ! let it be forgotten. Runjeet has great power, might save the Sirdar from peril, would hold his life as a sworn vow ; will he not say peace ?”

“ Never !” again said Howard, without the slightest yielding.

“ Let it be !” Runjeet’s words were so repeated. “ Runjeet may chance win a better judgment ; he may prove to the Sirdar, by aiding his personal safety, that he might have given him a better favour.”

“ A British officer,” Howard said, haughtily, “ can protect his own safety !”

“ It may be not,” Runjeet scarcely suffered Howard’s words to be repeated. “ And he be glad to take, ay ! even his life—at the hands of one so much despised.”

“ I will take my chance,” Howard said, proudly ; “ and, let us meet in honourable, open fight, and I ask nothing but my own arm to save my life. It might be, he who

now promises so much, might have to cry me mercy."

"For heaven's sake, Zulmanie!" Ada cried, in great alarm, "let this be finished; see you not it will end in open rupture? Do, pray, bid Runjeet retire."

Zulmanie grasped her lover's arm, drawing him again to where Ada was reclining; he took her hand (Howard saw it, and for a moment, had nigh darted forward to prevent his touching her), and respectfully kissing it, drew himself proudly up, and without even a look in the direction where Howard stood, withdrew from the apartment.

"Foul murderer!" Howard impetuously exclaimed, while scarcely he had quitted them; "I touch a hand, still wet with the Envoy's blood! I thank thee, Heaven, that my indignation did not strike the miscreant down!"

"Patience, Howard, patience!"

"Patience, indeed! and this treacherous sycophant, with all his protestations, and seeming fair, ready, ay! now ready to act again the

fearful tragedy that cost poor McNaughten his life ! but I knew the slayer, and he *knew* I knew him.

“ Yet, be calm, dearest, for my sake ; nor scorn to temporize with circumstances, because of the fearful jeopardy in which you are placed ! Do not, my own beloved Howard, let go one chance of safety, however despicable ; think of me and let that one thought rule you.”

“ It shall, dearest Ada—it does ; but my indignant soul will rise up against such cold-blooded treachery ; and what is to hinder this precious chief waylaying me now ? it were but of a piece with the rest, methinks.”

“ No, no—his gratitude to me ; the strong hold I have on Zulmanie’s love, is your immunity from him.”

“ Well ! we shall see ; and indeed ’tis time I tested it, for already have I doubled the promised time ; and should my guide forsake me, I am indeed in peril.”

“ For heaven’s sake, be wary, Howard ; this parting is dreadful ; ’tis, indeed, like the severing of body and soul !”

“ ‘Tis but for a brief fortnight, Ada.”

“ God grant it may not be more !”

“ Doubt not for my safety, my own sweetest.
I may e’en anticipate your arrival at Bombay.”

“ Oh, that the time were come, dearest
Howard !”

“ God bless thee, my Ada !”

And, with one last fond embrace, the lovers
parted.

One at least, sad, dejected, desolate : her
future crowded with fears and terrible apprehensions, made still more torturing from the
firm conviction how fondly she was beloved.

And what will not a woman do and suffer for
him she loves ? ‘Tis a beautiful thought, that pure,
unselfish feeling, which beams on the fond heart
of woman, in its devotion to its beloved object ;
making it as the light of her soul’s path, bright
and glorious.

CHAPTER VII.

He'd won a dainty round of cheese,
Which well his palate seemed to please
But which a neighb'ring mouse had kept,
And feasted on, while he had slept.
But now he swore that he would try,
To circumvent such villainy ;
And once resolv'd, thenceforth no rest
Not once came near his eager breast
But fretting, fuming, raging,
He liv'd on the presaging
Of sure success.

Not many weeks saw Ada on her return journey. No sooner had Ramasamy become acquainted with her intention of accompanying him, than he was all anxiety to set out. To his eager imagination—eager on that one subject, the great law case was as good as won ; and he seemed deter-

mined not to let one day intervene unnecessarily, between the full content of its glorious consummation.

His arrangements were upon his usual complete scale ; but this time he had selected for the ladies a very easy, but to Ada a very curious, mode of conveyance, the Kujawur, almost peculiar to the country ; a kind of swinging hammock, slung between two camels ; which, if the animals are trained to go at anything like equal paces, forms a very luxurious means of transit, free also from the injurious consequences to which the camel's gait is known to give rise.

It was evident that Ramasamy was a great man at the different posts where he stopped. A long life of successful traffic, had given him many opportunities of advantaging those among whom he sojourned by his way ; besides that, his large cavalcade, in many instances, was a source of present gain to them ; so, that his arrangements for the convenience of the lady part of his company, were excellent. It was, however, always Ada first to be considered, then Zulmanie ; much as he loved his daughter, yet so

eager was he, in every way to promote Ada's comfort and pleasure—for with her was associated in his mind the very embodiment of his success in the great law case, that he made her paramount in all his present thoughts and provisions.

They travelled very steadily and very safely; the country was quiet enough now; the towns and villages, after they had passed their third day's journey, seemed deserted of all but women and children: their late troubled excitement had found a vent; and pouring out their numbers, down to the very boys, they were crowding on the steps of the retreating army.

But they told not Ada this. She had never dreamt of the utter treachery, to which that treacherous people had committed themselves. She had never dreamt, not in her remotest thoughts, of the fearful massacre it was even then consummating: so that the journey was spared the anguish, the agony that was too surely in store for her.

They had soon passed into a milder climate: apart from the more mountainous districts of Cabool, the severe winter, which had accom-

panied their earlier travel, soon passed into a more temperate climate, and at the end of the third week they had again the warm sun of the southern land. And Ada was very sensible, from the ease and uniformity of their progress, what a very different matter it was travelling by aid of good arrangements, and all the appliances which money and long use could give, from her previous uncertain, ill-provided, perilous journey.

It was at Kurrachee that her first alarm of danger to the retreating army, and in consequence to him in whom her soul was wrapped, occurred to her. Dark, undefined reports had been brought there by some wayfaring peasants, of fighting and bloodshed; whispers of the savage slaughter, which in reality had occurred; whose very dimness but added to the disquiet and alarm which Ada felt for Howard's safety. The rumour, however, was so indistinct, and seemed to rest on such meagre foundations, that she tried to reject its validity—tried to banish it utterly from her thoughts.

They were there many days before any vessel could be procured to take them on to Bombay.

It was no use being impatient ; there was no remedy but to submit, hard, to an anxious, loving heart, as the suspense was.

It was a regular endurance of life, for there was nothing to be seen, or heard, or done : even Zulmanie, who could always talk, at least on the Runjeet topic, even she succumbed to the dull monotony of those weary days, and panted for very *ennui*.

Ada had entirely won her heart—all that was not Runjeet's and her father's—there was no fourth interest in the whole of her world. She had, at the moment, resented her lover's rejection by Ada's lover ; but soon appeased, by explanations Runjeet had given her, she had not failed to exact a solemn promise from him to protect Howard by every means in his power ; little as Howard had acknowledged the intention, when, finding himself scathless of hurt, when all were falling before the blue knight's presence, he had thought to end his fatal influence by selling his life in Runjeet's destruction.

By some kind of tacit consent, however, the two friends seemed to avoid all allusion to the

subject of the disturbances: how could it be otherwise? What was exultation and triumph to the one—and cause of exultation there was in the valour and intrepidity of her country's warriors, had it been less tainted with treachery and cruelty—was perfect horror to the other; and Zulmanie, fearing in any way to lose Ada's love, shrank from connecting herself with the discomfiture of the British troops. As, therefore, she might not talk of his military prowess, she talked of Runjeet's beauty, of his imagination, of his love: the last topic never failed.

"Sirdar very handsome man," she said, one morning—she had said the same thing dozens of times before; "certainly very handsome man, but not so handsome as my Runjeet."

"He is a different kind of man," Ada said, quietly.

"He not so bright—not that fire, that lightning in his eye."

"He has been badly wounded—is not yet recovered."

"Surely, surely, that is something; when he is quite well, has he flashing eye?"

“ Not like your Runjeet’s, I must confess.”

“ No, no—no one can equal his ; but can Sirdar speak poetry to lady ?”

“ How speak poetry, Zulmanie ?”

“ Can he tell lady’s eyes sparkle like the sunbeam on the rippling waters ; her lips like the gates of Paradise, beckoning of bliss ; her voice like the gentle Bulbul’s song ? Runjeet tell Zulmanie all that—far more than that.”

“ But then Zulmanie is so very pretty !”

“ You make fun of her, lady. But does her Runjeet say as pretty things ?”

“ Not quite, Zulmanie, I must allow. Lovers will talk a deal of nonsense at times ; but mine does not go to quite such rhapsodies.”

“ No, no ; only my Runjeet can do that.”

“ Indeed, Zulmanie, I am only astonished Runjeet could part with you for so long a time, or you from him, so very fond as you are of each other.”

“ True, true ; but you see, lady, Runjeet is very poor, only courage and beauty ; Ramasamy very, very rich ; give large dowry with Zulmanie—

if he gain the great law case, very large indeed; Runjeet knows that."

"Oh, this mammon!" thought Ada. "Now I understand Zulmanie. Of course, Runjeet will not change."

"Change, lady! my Runjeet change? Would the sun change—would he ever cease to look on this fair earth? My Runjeet change, indeed!"

"It were not likely, certainly, and Zulmanie so very pretty."

The young beauty was quite reassured: phrenologically speaking, self-esteem very large; never were there such attractions, in her estimation, to win and keep a heart, as her own, Runjeet's, of course, always excepted.

Their conversation was briefly interrupted by Ramasamy: he had, at last, met with a vessel to his mind, a native pleasure-boat, with spacious cabins, and tolerably nice appointments: he had fretted himself no little at the delay, thinking every day so much lost enjoyment of the thousand good things he promised himself and

his daughter from the result of the great cause.

The very next morning they had embarked: ere yet the sun had risen, Ramasamy, his guest, his daughter, his goods, and his retinue, were all safely deposited to his heart's content. And then came the slow work of the voyage, weary, indeed, to one of his impatient spirit, with the very small resources nature had given him. But for the considering and reconsidering of the great law case, and the acting over, in his mind, of all its details, it might have been that the little fat man had been actually lost in his own obesity. As it was, it proved very salvation to him, though certainly at some small sacrifice of Ada's patience, who was compelled, again and again, to listen to the same statements, and repeat the same assurance, until she was nearly bored to death.

And then a new trouble happened to him. He had, for a long time, had but one idea in his head; to which, from its vast importance in his eyes, he had deemed all meaner things would fall down and worship. And he would no more have

suggested to his own thoughts the possibility of his case being, in any way, made subservient to convenience or requirements, however strong, than have considered Ramasamy himself in any other light than the very imposing personage that he was. When, therefore, in the course of one of their many conferences Ada had remarked that she should not be with him long, his little eyes started out of their deep recesses with absolute wonder and astonishment.

“ Not go with Ramasamy to Cauzee !” he exclaimed, the very picture of surprise and alarm. “ If Missie not go, Ramasamy not go, and great law case worse lost than ever !”

“ Do not say that, my good friend : I will take every care to propitiate the judge, as far as I can ; and I shall give you ample credentials to secure his favour.”

“ No good without Missie ; Ramasamy done better stay at home : he never try, unless Missie there.”

“ That would, indeed, be perverse, good Ramasamy. I *could* not go with you for a long, uncertain period ; I am compelled to remain at

Bombay by considerations, before which all the law cases in the world would be idle,"—how his eyes dilated with astonishment! "of course in *my* estimation; and if I place you in as good a position by letter, I do not see how you ought to be disappointed."

"Ramasamy would not have same confidence, suppose Cauzee not mind Missie's writing, suppose—"

"Suppose nothing, but try; you can surely trust to my assurance, that my writing will be equally useful to you as my presence. You have but my word, that the judge will listen to me at all; and if I farther say, that he will be the same influenced by letter, you must surely see, that trusting my word in one way will compel you to trust it in the other."

"That, indeed, plenty true, Missie. Ramasamy did not see that light."

"Now observe, my friend; you see this large packet. I have already prepared my despatches to the judge; and, as you see, at some length."

"Good, Missie."

"I have stated all your kindness and care

of me, how much I am indebted to you for my safety ; and I have begged, as a great and personal favour, that everything be done for you, in your case, that my friend, the judge's position will permit him to do. Now, can I do more, Ramasamy ?”

“ Not if Missie don't go. She plenty done.”

“ Your cause, Ramasamy, by the means I have taken, if the merits are proved, is sure to be gained.”

“ Plenty prove merits : Missie will tell that the bad man, who wrongs Ramasamy—”

“ Never mind the details, Ramasamy, keep them for the judge. You will, of course, seek me on your return, and let me know of your success, and say good by to Zulmanie.”

“ Surely, surely, Missie ; but Ramasamy will not soon go back, or he lose Zulmanie : he shall try to make cause very long, when he sees it is all safe. Zulmanie quite content now.”

“ Yes, yes, when you bribe her with such beautiful presents.”

“ Could not bring her *willingly* without. But Ramasamy shall keep promise ; she so very pretty child, he like to keep her smile.”

From that time the old man became more reconciled, and less impatient: the very letters which Ada had placed in his hands, and which, with her earnest request to Mr. James for any protection and advice he could afford to her host, gave a long detail to Edith of her adventures, and her obligations to him, seemed as a kind of antidote to discontent—a talisman—a charm by which he had assurance of coming good—the certainty of success. They were, indeed, as much before his visual perceptions, as the case itself was before his mental ones; and Ada had some small misgivings, whether the whole packet would not be wasted away by sheer wear and tear, before the period of his reaching Chittore.

But other considerations now called for his notice, they were nearing the termination of their weary voyage. Whether it was matter of equal content to him, as was the interest which it called forth in his proceedings, it was to Ada a boon—a matter of most intense satisfaction, to find herself once more returning to civilization, sympathy, and affection, after all the trials and perils she had known; to hope and believe that

ere long that blessing, she had so far and so fondly sought, with aspirations not often chronicled for their intensity, would soon be to repay her for all her endurance and suffering.

The high jutting rocks about Bombay, were at length visible in the far distance.

Satisfied now that there was no possible chance of Ada's accompanying him, and that the provision she had made for him was effective, Ramasamy's next course was at once to proceed on to Madras, by the first steamboat ready to sail on their arrival in the harbour.

"Him quite like a child, Missie," Golab said to his mistress, after vainly trying to keep the good man quiet, "never done see anything so restless."

"He is impatient, Golab, for the good fortune he deems is coming to him."

"It ought to be plenty good, Missie," and Golab smiled archly, "for him plenty restless."

"It is his way, Golab; but be sure you are attentive to him; I mean him to take you to Chittore; to take you free of expense."

"Golab will not like to leave Missie, he plenty sure; but for Niacum, he'd never leave her."

"You will find, Golab, that the judge will do far better for you than I can; and I'm sure, if he does but half of what I wish he may, you will not repent of your conduct to me."

"Golab love Missie very much—so glad to bring her back in safety. Golab never forget dear Missie."

He had scarcely retired from the cabin, than Zulmanie, who had been on deck, doing embroidery work, which Ada had taught her, came down to her.

"Dear lady," she exclaimed, in great glee, "see how well I have gone on; but dear me! how am I to proceed when there is no lady? I shall quite pine for sadness."

"We shall meet again, I hope, dear Zulmanie; I should be very sorry to think it would be otherwise."

"Will lady come again to Cabool?"

"Not exactly that, Zulmanie; but I may see

you on your return from Chittore ; you will seek me out."

" Ah, yes ; much too fond of dear lady ; only wish she went with us ; is she sure it quite impossible ?"

" Utterly so, Zulmanie."

" And nothing persuade her,—no coaxing, no talking,—nothing move her ?"

" Nothing, Zulmanie."

" Did I not tell my father so ? would I have done it myself, had my Runjeet been coming to meet me ; how could he send me to ask ?"

" Your father discontented, Zulmanie ; after all my assurance ?"

" Indeed yes, dear lady ; he thinks — he dreams of nothing but doubt and difficulty ; when lady's eye is not upon him ; says he shall stumble on his way, and prays to the prophet still to change dear lady's mind ; he'd pave the very way by which she went with gold to tempt her on."

" But small temptation, that, Zulmanie ; an universe of gold were worthless dross to me."

“I told him like to this ; but still would he that I sounded lady ; but I would not vex her ; rather *he* were vexed. I know Zulmanie is no companion for lady ; that her mind moves in a higher heaven than any she can ever reach ; but she has given Zulmanie much love, much kindness, and Zulmanie never will forget ; always love her.”

“Indeed, dear Zulmanie, the regard is mutual, and, though wide may be our destinies, and our homes ; and it may be little likely that the wife of an Affghan chief should ever visit the land which I hope will soon greet me, never, never more to quit it ; yet do I cling to the thought that our mutual kind feeling may not be wholly wasted, but some intercourse be maintained to tell us that we still love each other.”

“Dearest lady ! I cannot answer you, for tears.”

“Nay, do not be sad, Zulmanie, and all bright thoughts before you.”

“It is not sadness, dearest lady, but joy to think you love Zulmanie thus.”

There was a noise on the deck ; their little barque was bearing right into the harbour, and there, to Ramasamy’s immense delight, was the steamer, preparing for her instant voyage, as the plentiful smoke from her funnel evidently declared. To sail alongside of her, engage berths for himself, his living kind, and his goods, was promptly done. She sailed in less than three hours, and, calling for a bunder boat, he placed Ada and his daughter in it, and, accompanied by Golab, rowed off for the shore ; the very rapidity of his movements scarcely leaving Ada space to feel the reality of her arrival.

He wished to show Zulmanie to a friend, who longed to see his pretty child ; so that, on reaching the bunder, he parted from Ada with many protestations and much encouragement ; he and his daughter hurrying off in one direction, Ada and Golab following more leisurely in another.

They never met again ; and, save that she

subsequently heard, from Edith, that the great law case was really won, himself and his daughter, their history, their very existence, became, in the future, as the dim outline of a dream.

CHAPTER VIII.

She flew to meet her mate, e'en there,
Where 'twas their usage to repair.
Alas, poor dove ! he meets thee not—
May never come ! ah, hapless lot !
An envious shaft has laid him low ;
Mourn—mourn, sad dove, thy bitter woe !

ADA's palanquin had been ordered to the Esplanade, to Mr. McGregor's bungalow.

She had no time to collect her thoughts ; knew not what to expect—what to hope for. Had Howard not arrived at Bombay—O God ! was such a blessing possible as his having anticipated her ? her coming would be like that of one risen from the dead—the return of the lost sheep from the wilderness.

Long before she was prepared for her arrival, the bearers stopped. She looked out; she was at the hospitable door, which had more than once opened to receive her wandering steps. She had scarcely announced herself, than there was a rush in the verandah, and the daughters were greeting her in the most affectionate manner.

“Good heavens!” said one, “dear Miss Greville, and alone!”

Oh, what a knell there was in that one word, *alone!* Lonely and desolate enough she felt then, even in the midst of the warmest welcome, of long-parted sympathies; for it told her there had been no anticipations of her arrival, not even its announcement; and where was he, whom she had dared to hope would have forewarned her coming, whose smile had gladdened her arrival—where? how?

There was an evident constraint in her young friends’ manner she did not understand: she detected, too, a quick, significant glance pass more than once from one sister to another, which still more perplexed her.

The suspense was intolerable.

"Had Mr. Smythe been heard of?" she faintly asked; for her heart was sick, and her head giddy with alarm.

An almost inaudible "No" was the simple answer; and she again detected strange looks passing from one sister to another.

At this moment, a hurried step passed along the verandah, and, before she was aware, Maria had rushed to greet her, and locked her in her arms. To her, indeed, she was as if one had come from the grave.

"Tell me, Maria," she whispered, as soon as her first excitement was over, "tell me, in mercy's sake, has he been heard of?"

"No, dearest," was her reply; "have you not seen him?" she asked, in great astonishment.

"Oh, yes, yes," she said, impatiently; "we parted at Cabool; he, to accompany his regiment in their retreat; I, with a friend and conductor, back, and we were to meet here."

"God grant the meeting may be yet."

"Yet, Maria!" Ada's searching look seemed

as if it would have read her secret soul ; " what mean you ? "

" Come to my chamber, dearest lady. This excitement alarms me. Our young friends will spare you for a while."

" Oh, yes, yes," said more than one of them, and each spoke sadly.

They passed through the intervening rooms in silence ; each kept mute by her own apprehension of alarm. Scarcely had they entered Maria's apartment, than Ada, flinging her arms round her neck, asked, piteously :

" Has anything happened to him, Maria ? For God's sake, answer me truly."

" Indeed, indeed, I know nothing—have not heard anything of Mr. Smythe."

" We have met with rumours, on our way, of fighting and massacre ; and I have dreaded lest he might be a victim to such."

" Indeed, he has not been heard of," how very solemn her accents sounded ! She tried to assume a more cheerful tone ; " and you are really safely back ? not much worse, nor less

pretty for your travels either. What strange adventures you must have had!"

"Strange, Maria? Yes, *you*, at least, will think so, when you know all. I have found other lost ones besides Mr. Smythe."

"To what do you allude?" Maria's flushed face showed she had some suspicion of the hint intended by Ada's words; "what other lost ones?"

"Know you not of any such, Maria, who might be found in that lawless land?"

"None, that I dare hope or think might be ever found."

"What if I had heard whisperings of Newbery's escape?"

"Good God! Miss Greville, I know you would not trifle with me! What have you learnt? Do I understand you rightly?"

"Yes, Maria, I have seen Newbery."

"Seen, did you say, Miss Greville—seen my husband? Oh, God! oh, God! I thank thee for the mercy! Where? how? when? And is he, indeed, safe and well?"

"He was both, when I parted from him within the month."

"And where is he now?—'tis mercy to tell me."

"He left me to attend Mr. Smythe, during the retreat. But what ails you?"

Maria seemed to gasp for breath—her face as white as death. Her anguish, for the moment, lost sight of all self-command. It did not occur to her how fearful would be the shock to her listener, when she almost unconsciously groaned out:

"Again widowed! again desolate! He is slain! Heard you not that the whole army is destroyed? Talk of hope, when all is despair!"

Ada started: her eye quivered for an instant, and then was fixed, glaring wildly on Maria; not a feature moved, not one muscle seemed to have the power to move; but, rigid and paralyzed, her whole frame might have been turned into marble, but for her short and laboured breathings. She stood in the same attitude and position, as when Maria had spoken, as if with volition, all power had left her.

Maria looked up. Her own grief, at the instant, succumbed to her terror at Ada's appearance. She rushed to support her, but *that* was needless; her form seemed glued to the floor: she called her by name, implored her to speak, but she answered not; there was no consciousness that she even heard her appeal.

She rang loudly for help, and presently the alarm spread through the house, among others, Mr. McGregor himself coming to her assistance. He scarcely waited to hear Maria's account of what had passed, than, directing her to be immediately undressed and lain down, he at once sent off for medical aid.

What a state of excitement the whole house was in! They had said that Ada was dying—some said dead. Oh, the fearful confusion when death really comes! Some came and listened at the chamber door, and, hearing no sound, went back and said she was indeed dead. Some peeped through the opened door, and seeing her lying so still, and all so still about her, confirmed the report to full conviction; and when the doctor

came, they shook their heads, and whispered to each other, “Too late! too late!”

But Dr. Currie did not judge the matter so badly as that. He seemed anxious and perturbed, when he learnt what judicious means Mr. McGregor had essayed, in vain, for her recovery; and pronounced the attack a case of nervous trance. The patient, he assured that gentleman, knew everything that was passing about her—heard all that was said; and he instantly required every one to retire, save Mr. McGregor and Maria.

The Doctor was a man in high practice, of very courteous manners—some said clever; but he was the fashion, and, if he made mistakes, he had a sufficient name to bury them along with his patients. It was a favourite saying with him, that the grave hid a many mistakes; perhaps his own experience had taught him so. Clever or no, however, Ada’s symptoms baffled his utmost skill. Application after application was tried without avail, each successive antidote proving as inefficient as its precursor; she was still in the same rigid, inanimate state.

Dr. Currie had known patients never to awake

from such a torpor. It certainly was very fearful. He wished to attempt to rouse her by some sudden shock, but feared the possibility of its ending fatally. The attack might yet pass by; it were, perhaps, better to wait, and see what nature would do. And so they kept watch all that night, looking in vain for any change.

When morning came, Mr. McGregor, who had retired to rest for an hour or two, sought the Doctor, whom he had insisted on remaining altogether with the patient during his absence, and whispered in his ear some suggestion which had occurred to him.

“ The very thing, my dear Sir. For heaven’s sake, why not name it sooner ? ”

“ I have only now thought of it, Doctor.”

“ When could it be ? how soon ? ”

“ In five or six hours, at the latest.”

“ By all means, Mr. McGregor. Hurry forward the attempt, as much as possible ; and in the meantime, keep the patient perfectly quiet. I will return at the hour : of course, I must be present.”

The Doctor’s departure, small as had been the

results of his attendance, seemed as the very separation of hope and recovery to those who were left behind. Poor Maria! she dared not weep, full as her heart was of grief and fear. Perhaps her troubles, searching as they were, had dried the fountain of her tears that she could not have wept; even had not the Doctor's strong remonstrance against all such weakness, in the patient's presence, deterred her; and she did all that she could in such a case; she sat watching by, as still, as pale, as crushed, as Ada's self could be.

Her young friends came creeping in from time to time, to catch the slightest sign of any amendment. A screen had been placed at the foot of the bed, so as to hide it from the opening of the door, and they could peep between the folds without a chance of being observed.

But there was no satisfaction. Ada had not moved—not even her eyelid had moved—not a sigh, scarcely a breath. Would she ever revive? Many asked that question in fear and trembling—more thought it.

And the day went on, with its business and its

pleasures ; and its many interests slightly marred for that a sick, it might be a death chamber was so nigh. Marred indeed ! how cared the thousands how the shaft sped, so long as it hit them not. Follow the very doctor, he who had been nigh twelve hours cooped up with his patient, and in his own mind doubted of saving her ; had, in his very difficulty, consented to an experiment he knew was one of life or death ; see his calm, contented face, the ready smile with which, as his open palanquin passed on, he bowed to his many friends. Hear his easy wit, and watch the light-hearted laugh with which he retorts some sally for his amusement. Even he cared as little for this sick chamber, when he was away from it, beyond his professional notice, as any of the multitudes, who thronged busily, carelessly, idly by.

True to his appointment Dr. Currie made his appearance at Mr. McGregor's house. He found that gentleman waiting anxiously for his arrival.

“ Has your friend arrived ? ” was his prompt inquiry.

“ Two hours ago,” was Mr. McGregor’s reply.

“ Of course he has not been with the patient ?”

“ Certainly not, Doctor, but most impatient to be so.”

“ Let me see him.”

Mr. McGregor conducted him into the library, where anxiously pacing to and fro, as if to quiet his impatience by the mere motion, they found the gentleman, whom they sought.

He seemed a man of between fifty and sixty, very venerable looking for his age ; with a deeply fixed brand of care on his countenance.

Scarcely waiting for an introduction, the Doctor addressed him :

“ Mr. McGregor informs me that he has already explained to you our patient’s symptoms, and the course we desire to pursue with a view to their removal.”

“ Fully so, Doctor,” was the gentleman’s reply : “ and I quite approve of them.”

“ No doubt,” the Doctor resumed, “ you see the risk. The system has received such a shock, that the reaction might fail to answer us.”

"I have considered it well," returned the other, "and am willing to sanction the attempt, so that it is at once attempted."

"I am confident of success," said the Doctor. "Once get the brain impressed with one distinct perception—the nervous system is at once at play again and we are safe."

"God grant it may be safety!"

"Let me first see," Mr. McGregor said, "that the room is prepared so as to favour the experiment."

"The shock has been a most severe one," said the Doctor, as Mr. McGregor left the room, "and the prostration beyond anything my experience has known."

"I have never heard of such a case," observed the other, in a very absent tone, "a complete trance?"

"No doubt," the Doctor said, assuredly. "I have treated it as such—almost paralysis of the nerves; but I have great confidence we shall succeed. I had once a very extraordinary case of a lady, the mother of a large family, who lost her husband very suddenly. The shock in her

ease, threw her into a kind of abstraction from all external objects, that she knew nothing for many weeks, moving at the dictation of others, and living a kind of automaton existence."

"And how did that end?" asked the other, evidently very careless of the information, though he asked it.

"Set her children before her Sir,—one an infant. Set them suddenly—it could not fail."

As he was speaking Mr. McGregor summoned them to follow him.

"You will bear in mind, my good Sir," the Doctor observed, as they were entering the sick chamber, "that the patient is fully aware of everything that passes. I will stake my professional reputation on the fact."

"Go on, Doctor," the stranger said, hurriedly, "for God's sake, go on."

The doctor and Mr. McGregor at once passed into the room; the stranger hiding himself behind the screen at the foot of the bed, and eagerly striving to get a peep of the invalid through the openings. The doctor forthwith

inquired from Maria what change had occurred since his departure—there had not been any.

“No change whatever!” he exclaimed, in un-repressed astonishment. “ ‘Tis time then more stringent means were tried.”

“I have not heard the faintest sigh,” Maria said, “though I have watched unceasingly since you left us; nor do I believe the eyelid has once closed.”

“ ‘Tis very unsatisfactory,” the Doctor said—he thought so too. He knew the symptoms were bad, nor did he care to repress the admission.

There was a sigh—it was indeed a groan, and sobs were heard, as of a man in deep grief.

The Doctor held the patient’s hand in his, and minutely calculated her pulse, at the same time that he carefully watched her eyes; passing his other hand quickly before them; but they flinched not, the lids never moved.

“Some iced water,” said the Doctor. It was instantly brought; and, taking some in his hand, he dashed it over the patient’s face. It seemed to fall on marble; it produced no shock,

and therefore no reaction. He tried it once again, and now more plentifully, but no better result followed.

There was a deeper groan from the foot of the bed :

“Oh, God ! oh, God !” a voice was heard to say: “spare me but from this !” and he who was concealed there, stood before them as if for a moment deprecating denial: he rushed to the bed, and clasping the inanimate form in his arms, cried out beseechingly :

“Ada ! darling, darling ! look on poor papa !”

The ancient chord vibrated through her soul ; the eye quivered ; there was a deep-drawn sigh : she looked for a moment wildly, half-consciously about her : she saw—she knew it was her father who clasped her, and turning her face to his, the pent-up tears burst forth and joined their full flood to his.

Dr. Currie saw he was no longer wanted there. 'Twas too sacred a scene for any stranger's eye to intermeddle with.

CHAPTER IX.

Stay, my good Sir ! you get on much too fast ;
O'er that last page I scarce my eyes have cast ;
And cannot understand how came the man,
So well-tim'd too ! pray tell me, if you can ?
—'Twas thus, my friend—

IT will be necessary to go back in our history, so as to account for Mr. Greville's opportune presence at his daughter's sick bed. Opportune, inasmuch, as had he not been there, the prostration under which she had sunk so utterly, might have cost her her life.

It will be remembered, that the last notice we had of him, was when, after learning the non-success of his friend's interference, to meet with Ada on the arrival out of the 'Sappho,' he had been left a prey to the most torturing suspense.

A state of suffering, to his intense affection, and the believed wrong he had committed against it, so hard to bear, that it was a perfect elysium, when Ada's letter, which she had written on her arrival at Bombay, reached him.

He thought not of the space that separated them ; shuddered not at the dangers to which she was exposing herself, or cared to think that she was pursuing a purpose, which might part them entirely : it was enough that she was safe—that one fact annihilated all meaner interests.

But when her second letter came, and which, though written many weeks after, he received within a fortnight of the first, and he found her on the eve of forcing a passage through a wild, lawless, disturbed country—alone, unprotected ; his anguish knew no bounds, and he at once determined to seek her, if it were at the world's end.

Mr. Greville was now unfettered by business arrangements. He had closed the old Bank, so soon as its affairs had been wound up and

settled. He was still a very rich man ; for the foreign loan, the jeopardy of which had so fearfully threatened him, had been realized, and his late neighbour, Sir John Newman, paid. He had no bar to his movements, even did he desire a very lengthened absence. Only partially restored in health, the anxiety and depression which hung upon his thoughts, made even the change, and the needful exertions for his journey, a benefit to him, tending materially to advance his convalescence.

His domestic arrangements for his absence were simple and few.

Mrs. Whalley was placed in care of the house ; her tenantry of the lodge was thenceforth to cease, and her future life to be spent at the hall ; had not her long and faithful attachment to his family merited every kindness he could show her, it would have been enough that she loved and was beloved by his child, to secure for her his greatest favour.

Mrs. Whalley had taken possession of her new apartments, the evening before Mr. Greville was to commence his journey, and was in at-

tendance on him for some hours, to receive his last directions.

There were two very strict charges given her :

“ My poor Ada’s canary, nurse,” Mr. Greville said, “ mind that is an especial charge. I should be so grieved if we failed to let it bid her welcome home.”

“ Oh, surely, surely,” Mrs. Whalley said, “ it is enough for me that poor dear Miss Ada loved it.”

“ And, see here, nurse,” he had taken a key from his pocket, and unlocking Ada’s bed-room door, led the way into it: “ this place, nurse, has been kept sacred ever since my child left it. No one but myself has entered it; no one has touched it. Everything is exactly as when my poor darling quitted it, the very bed is untouched; even the marks of her last night’s lying are still here. I could not bear to have them effaced.”

“ My poor master!” said nurse, compassionately; “ and was it for this you have visited this room so often and so long?”

“Yes, nurse!” Mr. Greville spoke quickly, “I could not have lived but for the comfort I have found in this chamber; it told me that I had a child, who dearly loved me once, and who—as I looked at each well-remembered evidence of her, I felt did still love her father, much as he had tried to sever the tie between us.”

“Do not think like that,” nurse said.

“Now mind, nurse,” Mr. Greville went on to say, “let no one but yourself ever pass that door, until your poor foster-child has once more gladdened its threshold,—as I trust in God she will; let nothing be disturbed, and what you touch be sure to replace as I have done, exactly as poor Ada’s fingers left it.”

“It shall be most truly done, dear master,” Mrs. Whalley said: “yourself could not have a greater care than mine shall be. Oh, God! bring my poor young lady safely back.”

“I feel content, nurse, that she will come. An assurance buoys me up, in my saddest moments, that there are yet days of happiness for me in her restored affection. And, therefore,

let us keep inviolate the little we have of her, until herself does appear."

"It shall be done, master," Mrs. Whalley again said.

"And mind, nurse," he said, significantly: "none of your omens in my absence. Do what I tell you. Believe that I shall come. Nay, pray to God that I may, if you will; but be sure of this, that if I am not to return, or my poor child is not to be restored to me, such events will not be told to a poor, lone woman, thousands of miles off, either by white birds or pricking Bibles."

"You are too hard on me, master!"

"I mean it for your benefit, nurse, though I do not expect you will benefit by it: but thus far let it be, not to suffer you to relax any attention to the duties I have enjoined on you."

"Indeed, master, you shall have no cause of complaint. I cannot, indeed, close my eyes to realities, but they shall not keep me from my duty."

"I am content, nurse."

The next morning Mr. Greville set out on his journey, attended only by Walters, his valet. He remained a mere day in London, to complete certain arrangements there, and then went down at once to Southampton, whence the packet for the Overland Mail was to sail two days afterwards.

An incident occurred to him while waiting there, that for a long time affected his mind with strange interest.

He had been making purchases for his farther requirements, and was now taking them to the inn, when he suddenly encountered his former friend, Sir John Newman. It was the first time they had met since the failure of his machinations against him—the first time since he had become aware, from Ada's own telling, of his detestable plot against his child; and he trembled with very fear and disgust at the sight of him, hurrying past without so much as a farther glance in the direction where he was. He saw, however, that he was recognized, that there was a moment's hesitation, but believed that the man's step had passed on.

Much as Mr. Greville was perturbed for the moment at the sight of him, and despite the many fearful reminiscences it had given rise to, he would not, perhaps, have dwelt long upon them, too glad to disabuse his mind of any such foul ideas ; but that very evening—he must have been watched to his hotel, though he knew it not—as he was sitting over his wine, the door of his private room was, after some little parley, abruptly opened, and Sir John Newman himself stood before him ; but not in his usual effrontery, but pale as a sheet, trembling as an aspen leaf, cringing as a well-beaten spaniel.

Mr. Greville was so much taken by surprise that he remained altogether passive : he had risen from his chair, as Sir John entered the room, he scarcely knew with what intent ; it might have been to require his instant removal ; his hand had been raised towards the bell, but he made no farther movement, in a manner, fascinated by the very strangeness of the visit.

A common-looking man had accompanied the Baronet, who, quickly closing the door as they

entered, stood with his hand upon the lock, as if it were, to prevent any farther intrusion.

Mr. Greville drew himself proudly up—still, still more proudly, the lower the now cringing Baronet debased himself: he fixed his eye sternly on him, but its look, its indignation and disgust were unseen by him who had roused such feelings; he dared not raise *his* eyes; he best knew why.

“I know I have offended you, neighbour,” he said, in an apologetic tone; “have wronged you—deeply wronged you—eh?”

“You have,” was Mr. Greville’s stern admission.

“I fear—I feel beyond extenuation—beyond forgiveness?”

“Utterly.”

“Is there not any recompense in the whole world I can make you—nothing I can do—eh?”

“Nothing,” it seemed a kind of torture to Mr. Greville to speak to him at all, “save, indeed, to relieve me of your hateful presence.”

"I know I deserve your anger, Mr. Greville," lower and lower did he bend himself, "that I would have ruined you, but I will make any reparation."

"Reparation, you villain?" Mr. Greville indignantly asked; "I freely forgive you, as I hope God will forgive me my sins, for your attempt upon my property; but your outrage on my child, I feel it would be wicked to pass by."

Sir John started at Mr. Greville's words; it was evident he had not dreamt of the full extent of his knowledge as to all his proceedings.

"But still you can have mercy," he said, piteously; "if you reject me, I am lost. I'll give you anything you ask; I'll even convey the Fairfield estate to your daughter, if you'll but aid me now."

"Neither I or mine would touch your estate," Mr. Greville said, proudly; "but to remove it from a neighbourhood to which it is a curse. What want you, man? your presence is very leprosy to me."

“I have run myself into a fearful scrape ; exposure and utter disgrace overwhelm me, unless this very hour I have a hundred pounds, or some one will be surety for me, until I can get it ; no one knows me here, not a soul but you—you know that a thousand times the sum is in my power.”

“*I lend you a hundred pounds !*” Mr. Greville said, indignantly, “*I become surety for such a wretch ?*”

“I am a villain !” he said, in such a tone of despair, that even Mr. Greville’s wrath was somewhat softened, “but, for heaven’s sake ! save me—I will—”

“Sir John,” Mr. Greville interrupted his words, “let this be finished ; I would not be surety for you, if I could. I ask not your crime, I might probably guess it ; but, be the consequences what they may, I will not be the one to aid you ; for I should feel myself disgraced to do it ; I insist therefore—”

“Do not reject me,” he had thrown himself on his knees at Mr. Greville’s feet as he spoke. “For God’s sake, spare me ! if you do not—”

“Get up, man,” Mr. Greville drew back as if his breath had poisoned him, “get up; such would not be the way to move me. Not I the man to shield a villain from the penalty of his misdeeds; abhorrent as it is, from my nature, to act an unforgiving part to any one. I have the money it is true,” and Mr. Greville, as he spoke, took out his pocket-book, and drew from it two fifty pound notes, “but that I may not be tempted to do that my conscience tells me I ought not—” he threw them into a blazing fire, and in an instant they were consumed.

Sir John seemed crushed to the very dust. He spoke not again; but as one who knew not what he did, for the weight of anguish on his soul, he raised himself slowly from the floor, and without a word or look, withdrew from the room.

Mr. Greville might well tremble to think to what a lot he had so madly urged his child, from what a misery she had, by her flight, preserved herself. Any lot—nay, he would have been content almost to have had her

dead, than wedded to such a miscreant as this.

It was a long time afterwards that he learnt the fact of the wily Baronet's having managed to avoid the disgrace of a public exposure—no doubt his self, somehow or other, had saved him; and, by a perpetual banishment from his country, in some unbetrayed hiding-place, to escape the penalty of his crime. But the thing was known well and far enough, and not all his money could have saved him from scorn and detestation. Mr. Greville, however, for the time was only too much rejoiced to be freed from such a visitor, to care more for him just then, and bidding Walters to use all diligence, that no farther intrusion, of that kind at least, should be permitted, he ruminated half the night through on the occurrence. It was, indeed, one of wild and varied interest.

Mr. Greville, however, neither saw nor heard anything more of his reprobate neighbour. He sailed the following day, and it was quite a relief to be thereby saved from the chance of any second rencontre.

His journey out by the Overland Mail, was un-attended by any save the merest routine incidents, and he found himself approaching the Indian shore long before he could realize to his mind the possibility of this fact.

The first object, on his arrival at Bombay, was to seek his agent, to whom, on first assuming that Ada had sailed by the 'Sappho,' he had applied to endeavour to detain her. He had not had opportunity to apprise him of his intended journey, and great was the surprize with which Mr. Maynard greeted him. A very brief conversation explained his object.

Ada had named the McGregors as among those who had befriended her in her wanderings. Mr. Maynard was acquainted with the family, and would at once introduce his friend. He had heard some little of the young lady's wanderings; they had indeed been matter of much conversation at the time: he feared the following her would be impracticable.

As soon, however, as Mr. Greville had recruited himself, Mr. Maynard introduced Mr. McGregor, who, on hearing of his arrival, had

good-naturedly accompanied Mr. Maynard home.

“ I am the anxious father,” Mr. Greville said, after the first introduction was over, “ of a certain young person, whom *I* know as Ada Greville; but who, I understand, was known to you under some other name—Alice, I believe.”

“ I did know such a young lady,” Mr. McGregor said, smiling; “ and a very perverse, self-willed one she was, or she had not gone on any such wild-goose chase, I can promise you—I did all I could, save actual quarrelling, to prevent it.”

“ My child, in very truth,” Mr. Greville replied; “ and never can I forget my obligations to the many friends who have shown such kindness, although it was in a rebellious cause; but can you yet do more, and having helped the daughter, when she so much needed it, can you now aid the father in following after her wayward steps?”

“ Impracticable, my dear Sir,” Mr. McGregor said; “ utterly useless. I understand she went

to join an officer in the —th Foot, at Cabool. The troops are now on their retreat from thence : there is no question of the fact ; and I have been daily hoping for some intimation from the young lady herself, of her coming back ; for we have many claims amongst us to call for her earliest notice.”

“ ‘Tis most unsatisfactory,” Mr. Greville said ; “ but I fear the case is without remedy, save patience.”

And, in truth, there was ample call for its exercise in the sequel.

He had not been left many days to his disquieting thoughts, than fresh cause came to perplex and alarm him still the more. The first rumours had reached Bombay of the disasters in Affghanistan : they were too dim and indistinct as yet to be generally believed ; but the anxious father, at once, saw fresh trouble, increased alarm, more torturing suspense.

A few days more, and the rumours had grown into certainties. Some stragglers had escaped the horrors of the camp, and brought the wretched confirmation of the massacre.

Still was the news doubted, at least to the extent of the first statements; but now, day by day, some fresh assurance was brought, that left no doubt, even on the minds of the most sceptical, of the utter destruction of the Cabool forces; and intense and wide was the anxiety to learn, and intense and wide the grief when the names were learnt, of those who had fallen on that miserable retreat.

Few, perhaps, had keener cause for anguish than Mr. Greville, who knew his only child to be so intimately mixed up with the movements, and consequently with the disasters of the troops. He had no other occupation, no other interest, than watching for every fresh messenger, and thoroughly sifting the information which he brought.

There was, indeed, now not the merest idea of following after Ada. Too surely her fate, be it for good or evil, was sealed long before then. His attempt to reach her might be only to place a farther space between them.

At length arrived more clear details of the casualties: names were freely given; it was

known that the ladies had been placed in the care of the chiefs for protection ; lists were brought of the entire party, and the whole account of the mischief began to be fully understood.

But strange, in the whole succession of notices, no mention was made either of Ada—that was indeed unlikely—or of Howard ; and it was only on Mr. Greville's seeking out a private of the —th Foot, who had escaped the general slaughter, that he gleaned the fact of Captain Smythe's being unaccompanied by any lady on the retreat, as also the certainty of his being struck down, during their fourth day's march.

Then, where was his child ? To think of her, as having traversed a country such as that, without a friend or protector ; a young, timid girl, as she was ; so unused to trial, so unaccustomed to fight her way through difficulty, for that it had never approached her ! it was very madness to think of what might befall her.

He had heard of Golab, of whose fidelity and attention Maria spoke in no measured terms ; and it was the one single hope of the man's fide-

lity, which saved him from despair. He had written to Mr. James, asking for Golab's whole character, stating how utterly he was existing on the belief of his truthfulness. And if any comfort could reach him from any written assurance, he could not have asked for better confidence than Mr. James's reply brought him.

He had, too, been prevailed upon, in the hope of procuring some diversion of his suspense, to pay a visit to good Mrs. Burdett, at Poonah, where her kind and hospitable reception, and the very affectionate terms in which she spoke of his daughter, quite won the father's heart.

But all her attention was insufficient, so soon as she had given him the details of Ada's strange introduction and servitude on her, to allay the sleepless impatience, which, as a rabid fever, kept Mr. Greville without the thought of rest.

The cool, fresh air, indeed, of that high elevation invigorated his strength, after its undue waste of the preceding days ; and had his mind been as tranquil as were the objects around him, in the calm, mountain retreat where Mrs. Burdett

lived, it would soon have been soothed into peace. But, alas ! what calm, what peace could he look for, whose thoughts were as the whirlwind, still rushing, rushing on ; whose mind was as a tempest-sea, that never may rest ? Think of peace or rest, indeed ! and every thought urging him to distraction, every image that his mind presented, being dressed up in some fearful garb of woe ? The very wish for peace had no existence.

Mr. Greville, unable to control his disquietude, it might be, ruled by some mysterious sympathy, had hurried back to Bombay, only the night previously to Ada's return. Mr. McGregor had learnt that he would stay at Khandalla for the day, and had sent express to bring him on by any possible means, so as to insure his speedy access to his daughter's sick-bed.

The result was her salvation.

CHAPTER X.

The spell! the luxury of grief!
Who hath not known, and scorn'd relief?

THERE are times, in the history of most of us—is he indeed to be envied, who is free from the experience?—when tears are a luxury, grief itself too exquisite to be foregone.

It was a time such as that, in which the father and his child lay locked in each other's embrace, unspeaking, unmoving. Tears there were, the full tide of tears, that had overflowed all feeble restraint, and bade the burthened heart to seek relief; tears mixed up of delight and fear, complaint and gratitude; of joy, as complete as the

heart could wish to feel ; of grief, as sad as the heart could shrink from suffering.

“ Ada, darling ! darling !” at length the father spoke, clasping her even more fondly to his bosom, “ do I indeed again hold thee ?”

She could not answer him ; a fresh gush of tears had choked her utterance.

“ Cheer up, my sweet love,” he spoke again ; “ all will yet be well, and never, never will we part again.”

“ Can you forgive me, papa ?” at length she faintly asked ; “ can you still love poor Ada ?”

“ Talk not of forgiveness, my child,” the father said, hurriedly ; “ or, if it must be, let the child grant it to her father ; indeed, my Ada, it is I who need it.”

“ I have been very, very perverse,” Ada said, submissively ; “ I have caused pain and anguish to a parent that loved me better than every earthly object. Oh, have I not been ungrateful to you, papa—unnatural ?”

“ Name it not, my sweet child,” and Mr. Greville kissed her fondly ; “ it has been our salva-

tion, Ada ; it has saved us from misery, my poor child ; it has saved us from a living death. Oh, Ada ! you little know from what anguish your flight has snatched us."

" What mean you, papa ?"

" I would have sold you to infamy, my child ; I would have wed you to a reprobate, who had made your existence one of disgust and disgrace ; madman that I was. You did right, my Ada, to resist my purpose."

" Said I not, papa, that it was disgust ? Even before the infamous attempt I named to you, did I not tell you he was worthless ?"

" Worse than that, my child ; much worse ; but let us not name it more, for the mere allusion is sickening to my very soul. Freely do I forgive you, my own sweet one, most freely ; when my heart blesses your very denial of my wishes as our escape from misery—"

" Indeed, papa, I would not too much justify my conduct ; but I thought you no longer loved me ; and—you discarded me, papa ; you almost cursed me—"

"No, Ada, no ; mad as I was, I did not that ; but let us not speak of it more, my child. I have you now.' Parted as we have been so fearfully, to clasp you thus and look on you, changed and attenuated as you are to look upon, is ecstasy beyond all previous knowledge."

"My own dear, my own generous papa!" She started suddenly, looked strangely round ; "but what is this dark cloud upon my spirit ? Did I dream ?" she seemed to seek some explanation in her mind ; "dream of massacre and death ? Dearest papa, tell me, I implore you, what do they mean by speaking of such things to me ?"

"They should not do so, darling, they shall not do so more."

"But are such things really so, papa ? Oh, yes, yes, I remember now, they are indeed so, and I am wretched !"

"Be calm, my own Ada, and listen to your father's assurance. I am certain all will be well. There have been massacres, and death—fearful, indeed, have they been ; but I have investigated every information that has come,

and I am confident that Captain Smythe has escaped."

"God bless the assurance, my papa, if I may indeed trust to it! But where is he? why has he not written?"

"There may be a thousand unknown obstacles, which only time can solve. Trust to your father's assurance, Ada, and try to think that it will turn out as we wish."

"As *we* wish, papa?"

"Yes, my child, freely, gladly do I now consent. I can still make Smythe a rich man, Ada; his family and rank are beyond ours, but still, my child shall be no dowerless wife to him."

"Rich! not dowerless, papa? That wretched man told me my papa was a beggar—had to crave from him the very means to subsist."

"He was a very lie, my child, in all his relations. He knew, at the time, that I had defeated his schemes, and come successfully through my trial; that all his claims on me were then being satisfied. Indeed he was a very viper, creeping into the bosom's warmth

to sting it. Let it be; nor waste a farther thought on aught so foul. Tell me rather, my child, of your wanderings, they have been distant enough; of your trials, they must have been fearful enough?"

"They have indeed, papa; it is but by the mercy of Providence, and perhaps one faithful, true heart, that I am here to lie upon your bosom. I have, indeed, met with many friends in my wanderings; many kind and loving ones, I had no right to have looked for, and they have cheered the pilgrim's path of some little of its gloom. But there have been times, papa, more than once, when in the very anguish of my soul, I had thought that to die were mercy."

"My poor Ada!"

"Yes, papa, you called me that once, when you thought to—to—let it pass. But, had you known my trials, as they really were, your heart would have broken as you said it."

"Go on, my poor child."

It was a long, though of necessity, an abridged account, that she gave him of her wanderings; in more detail, perhaps, than she

had designed ; for he brought her back, again and again, from the very night she had left him, through all her many journeyings, until at length she had narrated all, down to the very period in which they spoke.

Mr. Greville saw that the interest, which the narrative gave rise to, was of benefit to Ada, and therefore encouraged its continuance perhaps longer than he otherwise might have done ; although the interest with which he listened, was as intense as hers in the telling of it ; and there were times, when his excitement grew so strong, that his very breathings were pain to him.

There were, it must be admitted, some points on which the narrative touched not—the merry trait in Howard's character, as given to him by more than one ; his offer to Edith ; his slight or cold reception of her in Mrs. Prudhoe's tent, were details which, from some unadmitted motive, she did not suffer herself to allude to.

And when she had finished, which was not for hours, her father gave her an account of his doings and his anxieties ; few, indeed, in

detail, as insignificant in their character, when compared with hers.

"But they were as hard for him to bear," he said, "he, who had no exciting principle to urge him on and make a mock of endurance."

"We have each had our trials, dear papa!" his daughter replied, "it is enough that they are passed; and if a gracious Providence will but bring him back, who is as Ada's existence now, I doubt not we shall be, both of us, the wiser and better for them. For myself, indeed, to know that I have my papa's forgiveness of the past, his love for the future; and to hold him thus, and rest the wanderer's weary head upon his bosom, is peace and content beyond the describing. More than once a world would have been cheap to have lain my head thus," and she nestled herself in his arms so lovingly, "if but for a moment's space."

Her father pressed her in his embrace, and held her fondly there, glad to think his treasure was safe; and she lay so still, so soothed,

so content! Presently she slept. Her gentle breathings told how peacefully she slept; and the father held her so quietly and so gladly; and as her sweet breath fell on his cheek, he offered up his praise to God for her restoration, with a thankful heart—a heart overflowing with gratitude.

He thought of the past, of the many happy memories connected with this darling object of his love. He thought to catch the very happiest of them; thought of the motherless child they were wont to bring and lay within his arms, even as now she lay there, as the stay of his life, the small bright star of his existence.; when its brighter hope had set, and he clasped her as the promise of still permitted happiness. He thought of her in her later childhood, when her innocent prattle wiled away his sadness, and her growing intellect, and fond attachment seemed to ripen the first blossoms of his hope to a plentiful harvest. He thought of her in her growing maturity, when the full charms of mind and body made her an object on which

a father's heart might well pride itself, and bless God for the gift of so loving and so lovable a child.

But far and wide as his memory could range, and it did range over many sweet spots of surpassing beauty, he could find none that could tell him of the peace, the perfect content, the total abandonment of all other interests, which this moment gave him. The storm had passed by—he lay amid returning peace.

And when the kind people of the house, no longer hearing the sound of voices, and apprehensive of exhaustion to the invalid, from too long-continued exertion, peeped cautiously into the room, they found the father in the deepest sleep, with his still slumbering child locked within his arms. It would have been very sacrilege to have disturbed them.

The day was drawing rapidly to a close before they awoke; Ada first, but so refreshed and revived; and she could barely recover her thoughts and understand the reality of her position, than she awoke her father with her kisses.

But she had yet much to do, much to tell. She

had to give Maria the whole account of her husband's adventures, of his sufferings, and of his rescue ; his care, and the sacrifice of all other interests for her safety. There seemed to be no end of the inquiries which Maria put to her.

And then another applicant presented himself. There had been, among many others, one very earnest listener during her insensibility, and who prostrate on the ground by her door, had very piously invoked the sympathies of the Prophet in aid of her recovery : but Ada had not dreamt, until he actually begged admittance to her presence, that Golab had still clung to her—throwing aside all her provisions for his return to his family, refusing to part from her until she was happy. Their wanderings and many adventures, which had thrown Ada so entirely on his care, had given Golab a freedom of access to his mistress, which, under no other circumstances, their relation to each other would have permitted. And with every, the most profound respect, Golab sought her in her bed-room, totally unconscious that their return to the more civilized usages of society would forbid it.

"You ! still here, Golab !" she exclaimed, in unrepressed surprise.

"Yes, Missie ! Golab here sure enough ; he will not leave Missie and she in that kind."

"And how will you get to Niacum now, my good friend ?"

"Missie first ; Niacum after Missie. When Missie well and happy—then Niacum."

"Faithful creature !" Ada said, pleased greatly by his attachment, "where should I have been but for you ! can I ever repay your care !"

She was yet speaking, when one of her young friends came for her to join the family group below :

"They were all so dying to hear of her adventures. Papa above all."

How strangely Ada felt, to be again restored to her friends ;—to see herself amid kindness, and sympathy, and affection ; in place of the hourly peril to which she had been so long subject, to find peace and safety ; in place of the hard struggles she had had to contend with, the strange lodgments, the uncouth attendance, the constant privations, and the unresting fear of coming

danger or its active avoidance, to see nought but smiling, loving faces around her; to be crowded upon by luxury, and find no call but content and self-indulgence. Is it to be wondered at, that the excitement of the moment, with all its quiet influences, should beguile her spirit to cheerfulness, although the sun of her existence lay beneath the dark cloud of uncertainty and gloom!

That when her father gazed on her, and saw the bright face, radiant with the interest of her tellings; thinner, perhaps, for the waste of its long toil, but beautiful as ever: that he should wonder, if they had indeed been parted; —if the whole were not some cheating dream, and this the blessed awakening. Had there been one more bright face, one glorious voice more: no lot could have been more happy—more blest than theirs whom that day had restored to each other's love.

The father saw his child's colour come and go; he saw that her excitement was carrying her beyond her strength and all restrictions of prudence: and fearful of any renewed attack, had

prevailed on her to retire at an unusually early hour, giving a strict charge to Maria not to allow of any farther exertion.

“To think of Miss Greville’s finding poor George Newbery!” Mr. McGregor said, as soon as Ada had quitted them. “After being seven years lost; what a strange, mysterious coincidence. Newbery was always a quiet, inoffensive, plodding man, of not too great energy, and went on his unlucky mission as the mere companion of Joynson, who was an active, enterprizing, fearless man; and see how it results—poor Joynson is taken, Newbery left.”

“Would we could indeed say so,” observed Mr. Greville; “and yet it is very strange, and certainly promising that Smythe’s name does not occur in any of the returns; still missing—missing!”

“He’ll turn up, my good Sir,” Mr. McGregor replied, “and Newbery with him. Depend upon it we shall see them both.”

“I like to hear you say so,” Mr. Greville said, “though I know your warranty is scarcely equal to my own; but I like my last informa-

tion,—the man declares he was taken from the death-mass; a few days, however, now, must elucidate the fact.”

“I have great confidence,” Mr. McGregor said: “in Newbery’s patient perseverance: he is a man full of expedients, can turn his hand almost to anything; and if he is in attendance on Smythe, I am sure he will bring him through.”

“Ay! if there were not such treachery—such a determined blood-seeking about them: but let us hope for the best; it is clear enough that my child’s happiness, if not her very life, depends upon his life. Would that the problem were solved!”

Mr. Greville was to sleep at the Esplanade to be near his daughter, and as he retired that night, he crept cautiously to her chamber to see and know that she was composed: he hoped to have found her asleep. The two hours’ quiet since she had left him, had indeed moderated her excitement, but there was a restless spirit and a fevered body, that gave small promise of sleep.

He tried in vain to soothe her spirit:

“ Trust to my assurance, Ada ; it is all I can give, or you have ; but I give it confidently —all will be well.”

“ Papa ! I have most fearful thoughts,” Ada said, tremblingly : “ such horrible shapes seem to pass before me ; I fear to look, and I dare not sleep for the terrors that I dream.”

“ Be calm, my child, be calm ; give not way to such fancies.”

“ Fancies, father ? alas ! they too surely are sad realities ! all of blood and murder ! Dear papa, why should such horrid thoughts come near me ?”

“ Do not give way to them, my child ; compose yourself ; try to sleep, dearest.”

“ I sleep, father ? I tell you I *dare* not sleep—said I not 'twas such anguish to sleep ?”

“ Peace, peace, my own sweet darling.”

“ Do you well, papa, to speak of peace, and these fearful objects peopling my brain ?”

“ Let me speak to you, then, of other things,” Mr. Greville saw that it was idle talking to her

of rest, in her then fevered disquiet, "of other times, Ada ; let me talk of your nurse, you loved her ?"

" *I do* love her, papa."

" And will, I am sure, be pleased with her remembrance of you ;" and he began to tell anecdotes of poor nurse ; to tell her incidents of bygone days, thinking, by the mere sound of his voice, to wile her thoughts from their morbid fancies.

At first it was a very determined eye that watched him, and its owner declared that she could not listen ; but Mr. Greville desisted not. After a while the eyes closed, but its owner again declared that 'twas merely that they ached ; the light, she supposed, pained them. Mr. Greville still persevered ; and, ere very long, the restless feeling had subsided, and his child had sunk into a calm, untroubled slumber.

He sat watching her for a long, uncertain time ; it seemed hours to him, listening to her breathings now, and now to the hum of the mosquito plague, outside the curtain, fearful almost

to move, lest some chance straggler might insinuate itself within the guard and awaken the sleeper.

At length, worn out with anxiety and fatigue, he lifted cautiously the curtain, and creeping beneath it, retired noiselessly from the apartment.

CHAPTER XI.

Doubt and suspense, like odious devils,
That in heart-rendings make their revels,
Gnawing its very core !

THEY were anxious days which followed, each one marked by its own oppressive weight, each by its own unsatisfying result—hope and disappointment—hope and disappointment. It seemed, indeed, as if hope but showed herself to introduce disappointment in her rear.

Every day that passed, and brought no result, was a farther removal from the hope of any prosperous one. Every care was taken to obtain information ; every arrival watched ; every rumour scrutinized.

Mr. Greville made it the business of his days

to search out every chance of tidings. The many waking hours of his nights, were thronged with inquiries whether anything was left undone, and he would often rise in the morning full of some new purpose, only to find the more bitter its failure upon trial.

So passed the following week, and Ada, who had trusted to her father's warm assurances, and made his feelings the index of her own, soon detecting, by his harassed looks and sadder countenance, that the brighter hope was fading away, began to yield her own faint confidence, and abandon herself to the worst apprehensions.

It seemed, now that the need for energy and active fortitude had passed by, as if her whole self, soul and body, sunk before her trials. She felt crushed to the very dust—too weak to make even one effort to rouse herself from the melancholy which oppressed the one, or the feebleness which prostrated the other.

Another week passed by, and still no tidings. It was too soon evident, that the inward sorrow was preying on her constitution; that Ada's

strength was wasting before the trial. A variety of unfavourable symptoms had come to her, and her anxious father, sensible how slightly medical advice could minister to a disease like hers, how impossible all usual antidotes were for her relief, decided to take her from the intense heat of their present sojourn to cooler and more refreshing breezes.

He had given up all idea of searching for tidings on the spot; the stragglers had ceased to come down now; the official lists of the wounded and slain were published, and still the same indistinct fate attached to Howard—still “missing.” Mr. Greville, indeed, had half determined, in case his daughter’s melancholy should continue, to send some one in search of him, if possible to bring some sure particulars of his fate. But he lingered in the purpose, as well from its difficulty, as from the latent hope, that even yet Howard would be accounted for—it might be far sooner than through any messenger of his. He knew well that, did he escape, whenever he might reach a post station, he would be sure to announce his safety by let-

ter. And sensible that no other course now availed save patience, he thought to assist its endurance, and at the same time, to take his daughter to more favouring air, by accepting a very kind invitation from Mrs. Burdett, who had written instantly on becoming aware of Ada's return, pressing their visiting her.

Dr. Currie, indeed, urged it strongly, promised the best results from the change, averring that the Bombay climate was too hot for the invalid's constitution ; that her return to a more temperate one was all she required. No doubt the man thought so : or perhaps he saw that the hurt was beyond any skill of his, and so sent her away on a forlorn hope.

The Doctor was at all times particularly averse to losing a patient, save by convalescence : so always managed when he could, to send any hopeless case to a distance.

So to Poonah Mr. Greville and his daughter went ; and if the change of climate did not really benefit the latter, the hearty welcome they received, and the very warm affection of her

hostess, bustling though as ever, tended materially to an improvement for the time, that was hailed by the father with grateful joy.

“Indeed, Alice,” the good lady said, (“Miss Greville, I suppose I must call her now—”)

“Nay, Ada, pray,” said Ada, smiling at the old aside.

“Well, Ada then—but my mouth can hardly, give up the olden word—our pure mountain air has a deal to do for you, child; and I must invoke its kindest influences too. (Sadly changed, poor girl! colour all gone—so thin too! Well, well, anxiety, care, et cetera !”)

“I hope we shall soon bring the roses back, dear Mrs. Burdett,” Mr. Greville said; “at least if pure air and good nursing, such as I see before me, can do it.”

“Nothing like our air, Mr. Greville, after the furnace below yonder (few English constitutions can stand it long). You remember dear Mr. Maitland, Ada, of course? and their inimitable son, George, I’ll be bound, he was sadly tried—

almost obliged to go back to old England—but came here, and now quite well.”

“And *still* here?” Ada asked, with evident interest.

“Oh, yes, dear; they have taken a residence amongst us, and very valuable neighbours they are: you must see dear Mr. M., Ada, (pity could not fancy son George, what a world of trouble it would have saved).”

“Does Mr. George often visit them?” Ada asked.

“Continually, my dear; he comes for a day at a time. He is advancing rapidly in his profession and keeps very closely at it too—makes a mistress of it, he says (not the one he would have had, I wot). Nice young man though, and still very attentive to old ladies; you remember Alice—Ada; a silly old woman—”

“I remember well a very kind one, whose generous care of a perverse girl led her into more than one perplexity; but indeed, dear Mrs. Burdett, I think George Maitland’s conduct beyond all praise, and must ever esteem him.”

“You would have difficulty to persuade him

it won't be more Ada ; he is very bigotted on some points, and that is one (never give her up, never know a second love ; he says—he thinks—believes).”

“Then I hope we may not meet,” Ada said, with a sigh : “I would not add fresh fuel to the fire.”

“What is all this ?” Mr. Greville asked, “ ‘tis a perfect riddle.”

“The penalty, my dear Sir,” Mrs. Burdett said, archly, “of having a pretty daughter, who, as a very serving-maid, won this young gentleman’s love, (and might, as I suspect, have won his hand—no doubt,) and a nice young man, too—was he not, Ada ? But tell me your adventures, dear child. I have forborne to ask, that I might not pain you by any unhappy remembrance. You know, Ada, I have a little curiosity in my constitution ; while my interest in you would fain have every detail of your wanderings. (No doubt, strange things to tell : what a chase for a delicate thing, like this !”)

And, while Ada talked to her, Mr. Greville sought his previous haunts, to think of hope—

how yet he might propitiate her to smile kindly on the future. Cozening cheat that she too often proves ; lighting up her flickering torch, to glad our weary footsteps ; and oftentimes when, trusting to her guidance, she has led us into peril, quenching it for ever.

In some such wise did she answer the father's aspirations. The first few days seemed full of promise ; returning strength seemed to glad the anxious means taken for his daughter's amendment ; a better cheerfulness to smile upon her heart.

Alas ! it was a very frail, short-lived benefit. Her weakness returned gradually upon her, her sadness became even more sad ; the wound rankled yet more and more, and wasted her to very feebleness. Where would it end ?

Mr. Greville saw plainly enough that grief and suspense were destroying his child ; that there was but one hope of her safety, to ascertain the fate of him in whom her soul was bound. He feared that the very time might foil the effort, though the mere knowledge of the attempt might perhaps arrest the progress of the

pining sorrow, which so surely was bringing his child to an early grave.

He named his intentions to Ada. She was very grateful ; augured good results, it might be success. She smiled, very faintly indeed ; hope had deluded her too often to be listened to more ; but she saw her father's earnestness, and promised, for his sake, to cheer her thoughts.

That very night he hurried back to Bombay. Returning to the Esplanade, as more likely there to receive the first tidings, should any yet come, as also to obtain, from Mr. McGregor's mercantile position, more effectual aid in the furthering of his purpose, he at once communicated his wishes to him.

“ I see nothing else for it,” he added : “ my child is sinking fast ; and the mere certainty, even were it of Smythe’s death, would be better than this suspense.”

“ It *can* be done, my dear Sir,” Mr. McGregor said, musingly ; “ I know the very man to do it ; but, to be effectual, he ought to be acquainted with Captain Smythe’s person.”

“ I was thinking of the native servant, who

attended my daughter in her wanderings—I mean Golab; he seems greatly attached to her, and would do anything to serve her."

"He might do: he knows the country and language, and, I believe, has seen Smythe more than once, though he is not quite the kind of agent for a work of this very pressing nature."

"Why not send the two?"

"I was just going to propose it."

"I have luckily brought Golab with me; and while I prepare him for the office, will you see his proposed colleague. I would have them proceed instantly."

"The man I have in view has travelled for me more than once; is an intelligent, enterprising man, and will omit no exertion."

"The very one for us."

And while Mr. McGregor went to secure him, Mr. Greville sent for Golab, and proposed the expedition to him.

"Would it make Missie plenty happy?" was his quick inquiry.

“ It may probably save her life, Golab, or I had not sent.”

“ Golab quite ready, very good master.”

“ But, my good fellow, what are to be the terms ?”

“ Terms, master ?”

“ The pay—the money for your going ?”

“ Golab don’t mind money, he only want to serve Missie.”

“ Will you leave the money to me, Golab ?”

“ That I plenty will, master : only if any bad happen to Golab, will master take care of Niacum ?—then he go all world over.”

“ Trust to me, Golab ; all shall be done, that attachment such as yours deserves ; but I do not think you have anything to fear. I send you, Golab, as one of the messengers, because I can depend on your faithfulness ; and am sure, if the fact is to be learnt, you will learn it. Besides, you know Captain Smythe, I believe ? You know whom I mean ?”

“ Oh, yes, master,” Golab spoke very confi-

dentially, "I plenty know. I saw him twice ; he very handsome man."

"And will know him again, no doubt, should you meet with him ?"

"Golab quite sure he would."

"Then get you ready at once. You go this very evening, if a boat can be found."

"Very good, master."

And Golab bowed to the very ground, more important than ever to find the high responsibilities devolving on him.

Mr. McGregor was equally fortunate. He brought his man with him. He could find a vessel, and would be prepared to set forth on the following morning ; would be paid, so much for the journey, and so much additional, in case of success. The terms were readily conceded. He should propose to make for the Indus, and traverse its banks. Many of the fugitives had come down the river from Cabool. He knew the country well.

There seemed, indeed, little left to do, beyond introducing the two men together, and giving

them to understand their respective offices. And Mr. Greville passed a much more contented evening than he had known for weeks, while preparing his written instructions for the messengers' guidance on their important embassy.

"I think," said Mr. McGregor, when they met at dinner, "we could not have been more fortunate in our plans. I hope we may take it as an earnest of success."

"God grant it may prove so," Mr. Greville said, earnestly: "I have my despatches ready, and shall see the men off, early though it be."

And surely he was on the bunder, from which they were to embark, with the first dawn of the morning, and some time before the travellers made their appearance.

The whole quay was very quiet: as yet, its usual bustle had not commenced, and few people were about. Two natives, indeed, passed him, as he was waiting there, who, having nothing better at the moment to interest him, had taken his attention. He did not see from whence they

came, but they walked like weary wayfarers ; the taller one, especially, seemed scarcely able to crawl on.

Had Mr. Greville met with them if only a month before, when he was so eagerly watching for any chance fugitives from the Cabool troops, he would have promptly questioned them whence they were ; but that unproductive plan had long since been discarded, and he let the men pass by without a word.

He saw that both were dark ; the taller one evidently very sick, for he leant his whole weight on his companion, and even then seemed to totter very much. There was little doubt of their being vagrants of some kind, for their shoes were worn to shreds, and their scanty jackets threadbare, and stained with dust and perspiration.

Mr. Greville continued to watch them, till, at about a quarter of a mile's distance, they met an empty palanquin, when he was surprised to observe the men stop it, and, after some parley, to find the bearers take the sick one into it, and bear him quickly off.

Struck with the strangeness of the incident, he was on the point of hurrying after the one who was walking in the direction his companion had gone, when Golab and his colleague made their appearance, and other matters engaged his notice.

He saw them on board their vessel ; watched their little barque sail from the harbour, and was turning to retrace his steps to the Esplanade, when his attention was drawn to a heavy cotton boat, lying along the bunde, by some immense leaves, of a size he had never before seen. There was only one man on board ; he spoke to him : the vessel was from the Indus, just then arrived ; the leaves common enough there. He had brought less cargo, from being hurried off by two fugitives from the Affghan land. The man believed they were native soldiers, but one was very ill—not likely to live, he should say.

How very foolish, thought Mr. Greville, as he walked slowly home, not to have questioned the men ; if only to have asked what ailed the sick one. And should they really be from the army, and had been able to give any tidings of

poor Howard's fate, how very unlucky to have lost the opportunity, and at the very moment, too, when sending the messengers on their distant errand.

Mr. Greville was not half satisfied with himself, and hurried back to consult his host as to any possible chance there might be of tracing the fugitives.

CHAPTER XII.

The shaft had struck her heart, and rankled there,
Wasting her life; and she so young! so fair!
And yet she scarcely mourn'd her fate, nor griev'd
Of all her happy hopes to be bereav'd,
When hope itself was quench'd!—

WHILE the father was thus effectually carrying out his intentions, the daughter was existing on the possible hope of their success. It seemed, for the time, to give a stimulus to her spirits, that promised the happiest results, and did credit to the hospitable kindness which waited on her.

Mrs. Burdett, indeed, kept her, as much as possible, from her own thoughts, and was con-

stantly devising excursions and drives in the wild, romantic neighbourhood of the place, that could not fail to interest even one absorbed, as Ada was, in her own sad thoughts. Mrs. Burdett fully appreciated the beauty of the surrounding scenery, and was an excellent chaperone to point them out.

She had lived on the hills for many years; her only child had married one of the assistant-collectors at Poonah, and her wish not to be separated from her, had induced her to give up all other associations, and settle at Poonah, in her immediate neighbourhood: and an especial favourite the good lady was in the gay, military society with which so extensive a station of necessity abounded.

Few individuals, however, maintained a higher place in her favour than dear Mr. Maitland, who had been greatly influenced by her catalogue of inducements to fix his residence in the city, and with whose family she kept up a most friendly intercourse.

It may be naturally supposed that she was not long in taking Ada to renew her acquaintance

with them : they lived on the outskirts of the place, where the green mountain heights rose in their beautiful grandeur before them, and the scented air swept in grateful coolness by ; and Ada was often left to saunter about their ample grounds, while her hostess was paying her many visits elsewhere.

Such had been the case one morning, when Ada, utterly unconscious of his being in the neighbourhood, suddenly encountered George Maitland in her walk : each, perhaps, was equally surprised : it was evident enough, from his manner, that he was entirely unprepared for the rencontre ; he seemed agitated, hesitated for a moment, and then joined her.

“ This meeting takes me by surprise,” he said, hurriedly ; “ I knew, indeed, of Miss Greville’s return to Bombay, but I had not dreamt of her being at Poonah : I am myself only now arrived, and had not been told what might have tutored me to a more composed greeting.”

“ I, too, am unprepared,” Ada said ; “ I knew not even that you were expected.”

“ My coming is sudden,” he answered, with a

sigh ; "I know not that I ought to thank the chance which has brought me here—before an influence I cannot tamely confront."

"Yes, yes," Ada said, kindly, "let us meet as friends—as a very kind one, am I behoden to you."

"Behoden to me? alas no! small is the kindness I can show; would to God it were as my thoughts would have it! but that privilege may never be—too good for my benighted lot."

"No, no, not benighted! I hear of your advancement; delight to listen to the high encomiums which ever attend the mention of your name; and, from my heart, wish your lot may be as proud as it deserves."

"Proud! alas, it is but a mask that hides the hollow waste beneath! proud is not a word to couple with any lot George Maitland may ever know. But I will not be ungrateful to your wish; dark as my thoughts too frequently come to me, I will not deny that a growing interest makes my professional engagements less burthen-some than they were wont to be—may eventually

supplant the sadness in which I have too much indulged."

"It glads my very heart to hear you say so," Ada spoke fervently; "it will ever glad me to hear of your welfare."

"I thank you, Miss Greville; indeed I have much to thank you for, and it is a privilege I do not lightly hold, to be in your thoughts—would that happier objects were presented there! I grieve to hear, but far more to see, the trace of suffering, whose very cause, matchless in its devotedness, but makes me feel more bitterly my blighted lot."

"No more of that, Mr. Maitland; let it be ever a forbidden subject between us; the trace is not without the inward wound, that wears the very life away—there had need be the outward evidence."

"God heal the wound! though the remedy were George Maitland's more utter despair!"

"What mean you? to what wild hope are you clinging? Awake, dreamer! think not of impossible things; the grave alone can heal the heart's disrupted ties: look on me! see you

not that the hand of death is already busy here?"

"I am rebuked: though it is hard to crush the sweetest hope heart ever revelled in; harder still to think a life, so blest and lovely, should waste to an early tomb. No, no! I cannot think a fate like that awaits you, lady: joy and happy thoughts will still be yours, and leave you nothing to wish for."

"I think it not—expect it not—I feel that my happiness is wrecked, and care not more to brave the storm which is overwhelming me?"

"Yet take heart; all will yet be well with you; there is an elasticity in the human mind that lifts it above the darkest storms, and time will wear the deepest grief."

"Or wear the life, Mr. Maitland."

"If yielded to irresistingly."

"And think you there is always ability to resist?"

"Always the power, I will not say it can always rule."

"Then do not yourself deny your own phi-

losophy, but strive against a feeling which may never give you aught but disappointment and regret.”

“The rebuke is fair, Miss Greville, but the cases do not agree. Whatever my regret, I would still cling to it, as the sweetest thought of my existence.”

“And it so hopeless? They say that nothing can exist which has no hope.”

“But mine is not hopeless—mad it may be—”

“Hush, hush! I may not, will not listen to you.”

“Yet stay, Miss Greville, one other word; I may not—dare not meet you more!”

“Yes, one other word, but it shall be in warning never more to think of me save as a friend—a true, esteeming one, if you please: for be sure, you will either hear of me as placed utterly beyond the possibility of your hope, or you will hear of me in my grave—God alone knows which it will be.”

“Yet, at least, know the undying hope you leave with me.”

"No, no, this merest ecstasy I may not bear ;
let me pass by."

And, scarcely waiting for him to give her room, she hurried past him into the house.

"Inexorable fate!" George Maitland exclaimed, as he sadly watched her retiring step, "hard is thy decree ! but yet I'll hope, though it were against hope ; the deepest grief will indeed wear out in time, and who knows but, in the sequel, a change may come, and with it bliss ? He does well to live upon a hope, however frail, who has no other thought to hold him !"

He walked sorrowfully away, belying the hope of which he spake, though, in truth, it was as the very breath on which he lived.

But is it not ever so with hope, cheating, mocking, cozening, as she too often is ? do we not still madly yield to her plausible voice, and, though deceived a thousand times, still trust her as confidently as ever ? And his is a cheerless lot, indeed, which never hears her voice ; far better to be deluded, than hear no voice at all.

A great surprise had awaited Ada's return to the house. Mrs. Burdett was looking eagerly for her, very bustling, and very important.

"Such a piece of news, my dear!" the old lady scarcely could wait till she came within hearing. "Who do you think has arrived?" She saw, by Ada's flushing face and excited look, that she had misled her thoughts.

("Dear me!" said the good woman, aside, "how cautious one ought to be; thinks her lover has been found! dear me! very sorry.")

"Who has arrived? for pity's sake tell me."

Ada trembled with agitation. She had indeed, at the moment, thought that tidings had come of Howard, and her revulsion of feeling was most painful.

"It is I, my dear child," said a cheerful, hearty voice; and without waiting for any more of Mrs. Burdett's explanations, Edith James burst into the room, and warmly embraced her: "right glad once more to hold you!"

"My dear, kind Edith!" and Ada kissed her

affectionately as she spoke : "this is indeed a pleasure."

"I knew you would think it so, dear Ada ; told papa you would, to bribe his consent. Good Mrs. Burdett, there, wrote me word of your return ; and fortunately directing her letter to Bellary, where we had been called by extraordinary summons, I got it as I reached the place ; and finding some friends *en route* to Bombay, I persuaded papa to let me come with them—and here I am, just brought down to see our kind, good friend as I passed through, and to my joy, find you here."

"This is true kindness, Edith ; but it is like yourself: only a heart like yours could have suggested it!"

"I love you, Ada ; and love thinks little of pains. But dear me, child, you are very thin ; your long wanderings have pulled you sadly down."

"It is not that, my kind friend ! difficult as my path, that was but a small part of my trial ; you will have heard, dear Edith, of the doubt—

the terrible suspense which is bearing me down to the grave.”

“Doubt I have heard of, and suspense can well imagine, so long as such hangs over you; but you give too much way to the doubt, and make the latter doubly oppressive. Howard is safe—nay, look not so eagerly!—I only speak from fair deductions. I have seen those who saw him carried from the carnage; and all the officers, save he and another, are accounted for.”

“Do you really think him safe, Edith? I am afraid to listen to aught so blessed!”

“I believe he is safe, spite of the long silence as to his fate, that he will yet appear and claim his bride.”

“Oh, God! that it might be so! but my heart is breaking, Edith; be not angry with me, I almost wish to die. Without *him*, to live is agony.”

“No more of this, my girl! Time enough to despair when the case is really hopeless; cheer thee up, I say, and look at the brighter side.”

“ Your words soothe me, Edith, if only for the moment.”

“ I would they did more ! But come, dearest—you see our good, kind hostess has left us to ourselves : I am dying to hear of your adventures. Of course you saw the *affiancé* ? and rated him well I hope ?—tell him of Edith James ? Nay, let me know all ; nor shake your pale face at me in such denial.”

“ I cannot speak of him, Edith—not lightly at least, of one whom the grave may hold.”

“ No, no, Ada, darling ; such devoted constancy *must* have its reward. Let us rather talk of him as of one, whom any day may bring back to us. Now, tell me child, did you speak to the renegade of Edith, and did he dare deny it ?”

“ If I must say, Edith, he did not ; though he justified his conduct.”

“ The devil he did !—don’t be quite shocked, my dear ; and could you be such a fool as to believe him ? Well, well ! I suppose Love is blind ? the fables say so ; and *certes* lovers are

blind as the very beetles, that bump you in the face and think it all right."

"And yet he justified himself; and blind or no, *I* was content."

"No doubt! no doubt. If his love had been free as the air and he had *justified* himself, all would be right; lovers are such fools! Don't be affronted, dearest!"

"I wonder if Edith James would prove wiser, were she one?"

"Excuse me, my dear, but Edith is far too wise to begin the foolish game! She in love, indeed? ask the lamb to go and court the wolf; or bid the dove seek the falcon's nest, as think to see her place her happiness on such an idle hope."

"I would I might see the day, that sees Edith a lover!"

"A miserable one it would be, dearest. No, no, I've seen enough of its misery; and even when love and content unite to make it blest, if it ever is to be so, I still see but pale cheeks and stricken hearts. Heaven preserve me from the

touch of it ! 'twould be blight to my own free thoughts."

" You are incorrigible, Edith ; did I not know your warm affection, I should call you a misanthrope."

" Man-hater would be nearer the fact, and only them when they come a wooing, and then I do despise and hate them manfully."

" And keep the love for your female friends, as I can testify."

" I can love a friend, deeply, devotedly ! I can love one with all the intensity of love, which you lovers think to appropriate to yourselves, and would traverse heaven and earth to serve one."

" There again I can certify, dear Edith, at least that you brave the wilderness and the desert to even see one."

" Ay ! but the huge temptation in that case ! To see one I so greatly love, and such an one too ; with such quantities of adventures to tell me and wonders to narrate to me, and hair-breadth perils escaped and dangers surmounted, and a thousand other things, too numerous

to be etcetared. But tell me, Ada—you have told me nothing yet, how went your travel on? I heard from you on your arrival at Bombay from Bellary, and then comes a blank for weeks and months."

And Ada had the oft-told tale again to tell, but now to a far more intent listener; to whom its minutest features were interesting; and pages of the eventful history had yet to be conned over, when the night came and put a stop to the recital.

Nothing could be more contenting than the warm attachment which induced the listener's attention. Edith had, indeed, given her own true definition of her friendship, when she made it range the heavens and the earth to serve the beloved one.

And great was the benefit to Ada's spirits, to have such warm affection near her, greater still for the cheerful, healthy tone of mind, that inhabited Edith, and made her very presence as the cheering beam of a spring-time sun, full of joy and merriment.

She was constant in her efforts to wile

Ada of her melancholy ; would not suffer her forebodings to remain one hour unrebuked ; pointed out many real, and more well-intended arguments in favour of Howard's safety ; and if she did not actually convince her friend, she materially lessened her apprehensions, and bade hope again to whisper to her heart of the possibility of happiness.

So went on the days, and it was now quite a week since her father had left her, during which she had heard daily of his proceedings ; when a letter arrived from him, which changed the whole current of her thoughts—it was as follows :—

“ My own darling child will appreciate her father's feelings, when he is, at length, able to bid her rest with confidence on the promise of returning happiness. I would not, my Ada, dare to raise any false hopes : nor, do I say thus much without grave and mature consideration, but I have every belief that a day or two will end our suspense and restore my child to peace. I cannot say more, at present, than pray you to

throw off despondency, and trusting to the merciful Providence, which has preserved you through past dangers, wait patiently and cheerfully until I can rejoin you. God's holy angels protect and defend my child."

The excitement, which this letter occasioned, was almost more serious to Ada's health than her previous melancholy; it was really pitiable to witness her agitated, restless looks, and the fixed anxiety and care which seemed to mark her countenance.

The suspense was beyond her bearing; and, quite alarmed for the rapid prostration which had come to her, letters were dispatched to the father by the following post; urging his return back to her as quickly as possible.

It would, perhaps, have been difficult to say, on which side was the more intense anxiety: on theirs who wrote that letter, fearful of the sudden blight, which seemed to have struck their charge at the very moment, when hope had come back to her thoughts; or on his, who received it amid as great cares and per-

plexities, although the promise of coming happiness was there to solace him.

The letter, however, seemed to leave him no option but to join his daughter. He had not been so long separated from her without a cause.

CHAPTER XIII.

It was a stirring page—now hope !
And now despair, with which to cope.
Most vain it were. Now came a smile,
And then a frown, as if, the while,
The young content to chill, and scare
The hope of joy from coming there.

EVENTS had, indeed, been rife with Mr. Greville. It will be remembered that we parted with him on his return from seeing Golab and his colleague set sail on the expedition ; and, somewhat disconcerted by his oversight, when he discovered whence they were, in letting the two natives pass unquestioned.

Mr. McGregor, however, could not suggest

any likely mode of tracing them ; so poor Mr. Greville adopted all the unlikely ones, and if they did not bring him much satisfaction, they served to give his thoughts, as well as himself, occupation ; and so passed the time, until the annoyance wore off.

It was the second day when he was even then arranging for his return to Poonah by the night's mail, that, sauntering in the compound in the early morning, to his great surprize, one of the very objects of his search was seen coming stealthily to the house.

Mr. Greville happened to be passing along the entrance walk as the man came in, and at once confronted him ; and, it may be imagined, how delighted he was to have him to question, especially when his very coming there seemed to say that he had something to tell.

The man looked much the better for his rest ; it was the shorter one who came ; he had cleaned and mended up his garments, and though still with signs enough of wear and tear, they were far more creditable than on the morning of his landing.

He looked eagerly at Mr. Greville; seemed uncertain whether to address him; and then, bowing lowly down, after the manner of his countrymen, said, in an interrogatory tone:

“Master?”

“No,” Mr. Greville replied, “Mr. McGregor is scarcely down yet. Did I not see you, my good man, on the bunder a day or two ago?”

“Very good Master.”

“You came from Kurrachee, I believe?”

“Very good Master.”

“From the Cabool army, I am told? the people of the boat told me so.”

“I want Master,” the man said, “I very much want him.”

“But, surely, you can answer my inquiries, my man?”

“I very much want Master!”

At this moment two of the daughters joined Mr. Greville; the man started as they came near to him, he looked eagerly at them, emphatically asking: “Where other Missies? How many?”

“Only a younger sister, and she not yet come down.”

"Oh, I very much want Master!" and the man looked round as if for the vain hope of seeing him.

"Papa has just left his dressing-room," one of the young ladies said; "shall I tell him?"

"Do, my dear," Mr. Greville answered. "Say we will join him in his study."

And, leading the way, Mr. Greville took the stranger there.

It was still very early, and the room was scarcely yet prepared; Maria, in fact, was busy seeing that all was made right, when Mr. Greville and the stranger came in.

Again the man started violently; he seemed confused and troubled; and, bending his head, stood, with drooping eyes upon the ground, motionless and speechless.

Mr. McGregor had entered the room; the man was sensibly agitated on discerning him, but stood with bended head and downcast eyes, as before, nor once attempted to speak.

"This person," Mr. Greville said, "wishes to speak with you, my friend; and, strange! he is one of the men I met the other day."

The stranger pointed stealthily to Maria, motioning that she might retire.

"Leave us, Maria," Mr. McGregor said: "let no one interrupt us."

And Maria heard the door closed cautiously as she left the room, and could distinguish earnest and continued voices talking together; now exclamations of surprise, now whisperings. Not that she exactly listened: woman that she was, she was above that; but as she left the room, one of her young mistresses was on the point of entering, and while staying to tell her father's injunction, her quick ears could catch the sounds in the interior of the room, as she listened to the young lady's replies.

"Some news, I should say, Miss Madge," Maria said; "a very likely person, from his appearance, to bring it. Would to heaven, it might be so!"

"I hope, too, for your sake, Maria—but, dear me! where is all your philosophy? you, who used to be so calm and resigned; why, I declare you tremble like an aspen-leaf."

"My philosophy, as you call it, Miss Madge,

is worn out ; and I now have some hope, slight as it is, that moves me strangely.”

“ Patience, Maria, patience ; more easily said, perhaps, than practised ; but, hark ! are you not called ?”

They had passed into the adjoining room as they were speaking ; and, surely enough, a very loud and prompt demand was made for Maria’s attendance. What did it mean ?

When she entered the library, her master and Mr. Greville were seated on either side of the breakfast-table ; the stranger standing before them in the same downcast position as when first he had come.

She looked from one to another. In the expression of her master’s countenance, especially, there was an evident pleasure and satisfaction, that strangely contrasted with her own disquiet. Indeed, it might well be so, from Mr. McGregor’s words :

“ Well, Maria, news at last ; the reward of patience, no doubt. This good man has seen your husband.”

“ Good God !” the exclamation burst im-.

tuously from Maria's lips, "can it, indeed, be possible? Where, *how* is he?"

"Be composed, Maria, and you shall know all. Come, come, we have called you Patience so many years, I would not have you forfeit the title now."

"I cannot bear it; it is beyond my power to bear it. Oh, pray tell me more—"

"I wish to do so, Maria; I wait to do it," Mr. McGregor said, kindly. "Newbery has been attending on poor Captain Smythe, who is very ill—"

"Poor Miss Ada! And where are they? Pray, tell me, Sir. Anything better than this mystery and doubt."

"Why, to say the truth, my good creature, Newbery is not very far distant now—"

Some sudden thought seemed to flash across Maria's mind. She drew near to the stranger with a fearful earnestness, that was painful to witness; and, standing close before him, gazed eagerly on his features. For a moment, an expression of disappointment passed over her countenance; but the stranger had raised his head,

and for an instant their eyes met ; strange that, when every other trace has passed away from the features, the eyes alone maintain their identity.

“ Newbery !” she said, faintly, tremblingly.

“ Maria !” was his prompt reply ; and they were closed in each other’s arms.

“ Well, well,” Mr. McGregor said, after a few moments’ pause, “ this is all, no doubt, very proper ; but as you will have plenty of time for such little scenes in the sequel, let us to business now. And understand, Maria, not one word or hint of Newbery’s return. Poor Captain Smythe is very ill—so ill, as to leave but small hopes of his recovery.”

“ Is it so bad as that ?” Maria asked, anxiously.

“ Poor Miss Ada !”

“ It is for her sake,” Mr. McGregor pursued, “ and to save her from needless suffering, that we enjoin this caution. In a few days’ time, it will be seen whether his constitution can carry him through his weakness, when all farther restriction will be at an end ; or if it should please a mysterious Providence to take him from us, the

fact of his rescue and return is to be for ever a secret, which not even the grave must tell. Do you understand me, Maria?"

"Yes, Sir, fully so. Is he so very ill?"

"So ill, Maria, that although two whole days now arrived, Newbery has not dared to quit him, even for an hour, to bring us tidings."

"Worse than even that, Maria," Newbery added; "I almost feared I should not have any tidings to bring at all; for no sooner had we reached the port, than the poor Captain's feebleness, which had for days been growing on him, completely prostrated him. I had scarcely taken him to a friend's house, and got him into bed, than a rush of bad symptoms took him, and he has lain in a feverish delirium almost ever since."

"It will kill Miss Ada," Maria said, compassionately.

"She must never know it," Mr. Greville said; "God knows there is ample risk as it is! more she must never know, and I cannot too much applaud Newbery's discretion and self-denial in acting as he has."

"It was my very fear of being detected,"

Newbery added, "and thereby betraying all, that made me so fearful to come. I thought, too, my poor lady might be here, and she would have known me—to her, this had been no disguise."

"What a mischance!" Mr. Greville said, "that I did not question you, Newbery, on your landing! But we must stay Golab."

"Leave that to me, my friend," his host observed, "'tis far more in my way; and while we breakfast," Mr. McGregor added, speaking significantly to Maria, "do you two retire into my dressing-room, where no one will chance to come—you may have a word or two to say to each other."

In less than half-an-hour, Mr. Greville was accompanying Newbery to poor Howard's sick bed. He was staying in a quiet neighbourhood in the environs of the city, and seemed to lack no comfort or attention. The old nurse, whom Newbery had left in his absence, gave a somewhat better account of him; he had slept almost ever since he had left him, and it was the first sleep he had had since his arrival.

They crept cautiously to his chamber ; he was still dozing, but his sleep was restless and uneasy, his breathing heavy and oppressed ; and there was a prominence about the eyes, a starting forth from the head, that Mr. Greville did not like ; indeed, when he saw the death-like, attenuated form of him, whom it had been his wont to hear spoken of as the fine, handsome man ; saw him there in his delirium, tossing and tumbling about in fevered restlessness ; saw him grinding his teeth, and distorting his countenance in total aberration of mind ; it read him a lesson on the uncertainty of human things, which, if he had not before learnt, he did not fail then to learn to his thorough conviction.

Small content was there to Mr. Greville from that day's visit : his child's happiness seemed indeed committed to as frail a barque as ever ventured on a troubled sea ; and not a merest hint did his letter bear to her of what had happened.

The third day, a change took place ; the worst symptoms had passed away, and the patient lay still and calm, but so weak, so prostrated.

Mr. Greville had called a consultation of the medical attendants ; there was no longer fever, but the feebleness and reduction were so excessive, it was scarcely possible for nature to rally, and his opened wounds were letting out the little life he had left in him.

The next day, another change had come ; the patient talked incessantly ; he never ceased for hours to mutter some indistinct, unconnected words, frequently mere sounds ; then he would sing. Mr. Greville knew not whether the symptoms were the mere forerunners of death, or that the removal of the previous pressure on the brain had given it returning power of action. He waited most anxiously each hour's farther change.

That night the patient slept : slept all the following day, and in the evening awoke calm and collected, his wounds had ceased their discharge : he was decidedly better.

And that night Mr. Greville wrote to his daughter the letter to which we have before adverted, well aware that his continued absence, without some suitable explanation, might cause

uneasiness and doubt, which would be most injurious to her.

Thanks to the good nursing, and the quantities of nourishment poured into him at briefly recurring intervals, the invalid rapidly recovered ; and what was even more satisfactory, the mind's wanderings—that total perversion of intellect, which attended his first amendment—now passed rapidly into a healthier condition ; and he began to know himself again, to remember the past—all but the blank of his delirium, which was as perfect death to him.

And it was then that Mr. Greville, whom, so far, he had called the little grey man, perfectly unconscious who and what he was, was introduced to him in his real character.

“ And you have watched me thus ! ” he said, faintly. “ Have I not said odd things of you, dear Sir ? ”

“ Oh, nothing, nothing ! I’d need watch by you, when one I love so dearly places such value on your welfare.”

“ Poor, dear Ada ! unworthy—oh ! most unworthy am I of her love—of her devoted con-

stancy. God spare me yet to recompense her for all the sufferings which her attachment has cost her!"

"I fancy she will be recompensed, Howard, to have you safe and well, caring little for the past, when it no longer harms—poor human nature always does so!"

"And where is dear Ada? when may I see her?"

"She is at Poonah now, trying to gain strength from its refreshing breezes: as soon as you are farther convalescent, I shall return to tell her of your recovery; I fear for the undue excitement."

"I shall never be well, dear Sir, unless I may see her, or, at least, write to her."

"Well, well! we will see; it is, however, quite clear that, for the present, you must be content with your knowledge of her safety, and the anticipation of an early interview."

"But if I might have one letter—"

"We will see: but you are talking too much; I must forbid more."

There was, indeed, an impatience about the invalid, a constant attempt at undue exertion, that gave the greatest alarm to those who nursed him, knowing, but too well, that any relapse would, in his present feebleness, be fatal. He gradually regained his strength from that time, and seemed to be going on well; but there was a restless desire for Ada's presence, which set at nought all other considerations, although her father, who was constantly in attendance, explained to him it could not be yet. He told him that he had given his daughter some inkling of the truth; that he had a certain intention, which he did not explain to Howard, which but waited the hope of a few days farther convalescence.

He had heard of Edith James' arrival, and the benefit which her cheerful society had been to Ada, and was, therefore, reconciled to the continued separation which would eventuate in such complete happiness.

Newbery had scarcely ever left Howard's bedside during his whole illness. Mr. Greville, at the first, concluded that he was influenced by

sincere attachment to him ; but, upon expressing his admiration of such kindness, Newbery admitted to him that it was for Ada's sake he tended him so anxiously ; that she had pledged his safety at his hands, and that was enough from one who had been as an angel of salvation to him.

It was during his many visits upon Howard, that, from time to time, he learnt from him and Newbery the particulars of their hazardous escape.

CHAPTER XIV.

Yet onward went the pestilence,
Its breath more fatal, where more dense
The doomed mass ; it mow'd them down,
Sink did existence 'fore its frown,
And bite the dust. Such was the strife,
When only one had sav'd the life,
And surely that was charm'd.

WHEN Howard recovered from the stunning blow which had felled him to the ground, at the moment when he thought to stay the slaughtering career of the Blue Chief, he found himself lying on the floor of a miserable hut, dried ferns forming his couch, a large, blue, military cloak his covering. Sudeeq sat by his side, bathing his head and temples with water, and anxiously watching for his reviving.

Howard turned away his face in disgust ; but for his weakness, which left him scarcely power to move at all, he might have shown his wrath at the man's believed perfidy, in a less passive manner.

But when Sudeeq continued hour after hour to tend him with the same anxious solicitude, watching his every movement, and contriving from their ill-assorted means many comforts for his relief, and all with that patient, sleepless care, which told even suspicion of some deep purpose of serving him, Howard first wondered at his conduct, vainly seeking to satisfy himself that it was all a dream ; he then relented from his more ireful judgment, and long before he had learnt any explanation of the man's conduct, or had even spoken to him, had a better and kinder feeling possession of his previous indignation.

“ Why tend me thus ? ” he feebly asked, after watching Sudeeq's patient care, until he could no longer refrain himself ; “ why tend a man to whom you have dealt so treacherously ? ”

"No, Master," Sudeeq said, earnestly, "not treacherously: Master dead but for Sudeeq—a hundred guns were levelled at him, when Sudeeq forced him down."

"Rather be dead, man, than baulked of my vengeance on the murderer."

"Hush! hush! Master," and Sudeeq looked warily round, as if expecting to see some eavesdropper near; "he saved Master: saved him in the fight, as far as he could: brought him here—see his cloak."

Howard would have thrown it from him, scorning to be beholden to anything belonging to him, ay! though it was in his greatest need, but he had not the strength to do it: his very feebleness was in place of a better discretion.

"Did Master not know him?" Sudeeq asked.

"I knew him well enough," was Howard's indignant answer; "I have scorned him before now."

"All very well, Master, all very well; but he be sworn to save my Master's life, and he plenty do it."

“Oh, that I must submit to owe it him!” and the wounded man groaned in the very disquietude of his spirit.

“But Master listen; plenty do good if Master listen: Missie made Sudeeq swear to keep Master from harm.”

“Ay! there it is! there it is! a man has no business to be a soldier who owns to influences of that sort; and where are we?”

“On the hills, Master, just near the scene of blood: Runjeet had you brought by some he could trust—but they plenty few: Runjeet little power now: bad spirit up—do what them like: chiefs nobody.”

“Did the varlet think to control the elements? the biting frost conquered, not they; did they think to let loose the storm, and bid it back at a breath? but the vengeance will come.”

“Peace, Master, you too much talk: too much hurry yourself; be calm, and if Runjeet come—he *sure* to come, Master—”

“Let me not see him, Sudeeq,” Howard spoke

bitterly ; “ ‘twould kill me to look on the murderer now.”

“ Peace, Master ; our lives, the happiness of others, depends on our prudence.”

“ I care not for life ; and disgraced thus, who will care for me ?”

“ Yes, Master, plenty will care ; *one* most care, and if Master no value life, Sudeeq do ; though he gladly risk his—yes, and the welfare of others, too, to serve dear Missie’s bidding.”

“ You are wiser than I, Sudeeq : pain and suffering take from me the power to judge ; I will conform myself to circumstances, since we have no other safety.”

“ Plenty good, Master—” Sudeeq suddenly ceased speaking : he lifted up his finger, betokening silence, and almost that same moment the Blue Chief entered the hut.

Howard knew him well enough as Runjeet, nor in his heart did he moderate the scorn which had rankled there, when first he met him, and he had rejected his proffered hand ; but tutored by more prudent thoughts, and the sense of the

absolute peril of their lot without his protection, he forced himself to receive him patiently, to submit to his inquiries, to be debtor for his life.

Strange and wide was the change which had so briefly come to their respective conditions; the one still in the full power of his manly beauty and strength, proud in victory, renowned in deeds; the other, wounded and sick, and pale and disfigured, beaten and desolate, almost without a hope, but from the victor, whom in the pride of his heart, he had so lately rejected; he could not well imagine a stronger contrast.

Erect in form, martial in bearing, Runjeet's very personal carriage gave an air of exultation to his manner in the jealous eyes of him, who, stricken to the dust, looked up with the mortified feeling of the vanquished, that made it difficult to prevent the wrath that rioted within him, from bursting out in some mad outbreak.

Runjeet, too, had no small need of self-command to restrain his own spirit: bold, fearless,

lawless, as he was, he knew little how to curb the natural impulses which were wont to carry the impetuous man at will. He knew himself despised—galling was the thought to one, whose self-esteem made him second to none, whose prowess and renown the brazen trump of fame had bruted forth: he knew himself rejected, saw, in the cold, averted eye, that even still was the brand upon his mind, that made him accursed there: he came to him, flushed with victory, with his hands and feet still wet with the reeking blood of his countrymen, glowing with anticipations of high advancement, and the realization of his proudest ambition; to feel cowed and abashed before his presence, whom, foe as he was, an all-powerful influence compelled him to save from the greedy death around him; ay! although he himself gave not one merest sign for his encouragement.

Runjeet spoke to Sudeeq in a language foreign to Howard's ears, and there was evidence enough of a previous understanding between them, that contented little the latter's suspicion of Sudeeq's honesty: Runjeet's tone and manner seemed

earnest and deprecatory Sudeeq interpreted his words :

The Master was safe ; as sure as his hope to join the houris of the paradise the mighty Prophet promised him, so sure was his safety, as far as he could guard it. But he could not give him better lodgment, dare not even let it be known that he was there, for the wild fury that was about, which no control could check. When the storm had passed by, and he recruited from his wounds, an escort should be supplied to pass him through the country.

Howard thanked him not : did not even answer him : he showed, indeed, though it was a cold eye that did it, that he heard the explanation ; but beyond being passive before him, his indignation would not yield one smallest acknowledgment. He signed to Sudeeq, who, bending down, whispered in his ear :

“ Say some thank, Master ; just one thank.”

“ Bid the murderer go,” Howard feebly said, “ I cannot thank him ; I cannot bear to look on him ; for when I do, there’s nought but blood before my eyes—bid him go.”

Sudeeq promptly spoke ; earnestly it seemed, but not in his master's words, or Runjeet had not been so well content. His wiser policy had thanked him in his master's name, urged his master's feebleness, and need of quiet, for Runjeet's quick withdrawal, and thus induced the chief at once to quit them, far better satisfied than if the actual message had been given.

And then the storm burst forth, and Howard's rage, in spite his weakness, would have its vent :

“ Let not the murderer come near me more,” he said, impetuously ; “ I'd rather die than owe my safety to such as he ! Did I not see his treacherous hand strike the ill-fated Envoy down in coldest blood ! Even now, while he proffers aid and safety to a British officer, are not his hands red with English blood — his very feet clotted with gore, let out with the life from British hearts ! Sudeeq, be it for weal or woe, I will owe nothing to the miscreant ; if we cannot work our own escape, we'll sell our lives as dearly as we can — curse on this miserable wound that lays me thus.”

“Patience, Master—for heaven’s sake, be calm ! this violence will kill you ; see how the wound bursts forth again. Be calm, be calm, or ‘twill never be stopped.”

“Let him approach no more,” and despite his rapid exhaustion, Howard shook his doubled fist, in the violence of his rage, “and though it be my last of life, his life shall pay for it ! Oh, God ! that I might offer one sacrifice to the manes of my countrymen, and die !” he fell back as he was speaking—he had fainted.

The recurrence of such violent outbreaks, from time to time, whenever Runjeet’s name was mentioned, and of necessity it was mentioned frequently, as from him their present security and provision were derived, did more to retard Howard’s recovery, than either his wounds, or the low fever which wasted his strength. He was, however, spared any farther excitement of Runjeet’s presence—he came not more. The people of the hut talked of troubles and contests among the chiefs themselves ; and at

times the distant cannonading seemed to corroborate the statement ; probably he had no longer power to visit him.

This was no small boon to Howard, the fire of his wrath smouldered for a space, but being no longer disturbed, died slowly away. He had recovered in part, and long before any prudent man would have ventured on such a course, his indignation and disgust—indignation at the man's treachery, disgust to owe an hour's safety to his care—forced him to abandon the asylum he had provided, and to seek his own escape as best he could.

Exchanging his uniform for the peasant garment of the native, with whom they had been placed, and whose favour they had gained, and staining their hands and face, to give them the colour of the southern country, the two set out one early morning, on their doubtful pilgrimage, with heavy hearts and feeble hopes.

The Affghan peasant took them on that first day's wandering, found them a lodgment

for the night, and then, pointing out their track, by the distant mountains, left them to their fate.

And a weary, cheerless one it was. They traversed the more unfrequented paths ; often-times lost a whole day's toil, by having to retrace their steps. One half of the sustenance they got was roots and vegetables, which Sudeeq knew how to make nutritious ; for fear, lest, Affghan as he looked, and well as he could speak the language, some trouble might come from too frequent application to the mountain huts for better food. They made their lodgment for the night wherever they could ; seldom in any chance dwelling ; sometimes in caves, in holes in the rocks at times ; they climbed the trees at other times, when such were on their track. More than once the very bed of the mountain-stream, that skirted their path in the valley, gave their only resting-place, among the very marshes which might be the lair of wilder animals.

And all this while, Howard, sickly, and weak, and dispirited ; at times, indeed, so lost and

desolate, that he would lie down on the path, and bid Sudeeq pass on and leave him to his fate, careless more of life.

Their daily progress, of necessity, was small ; under all their discouragements and caution, perhaps it was all they could look for. Their hindrances were many, their perils not a few ; until at length, after a fortnight's persisted wandering, they passed the mountain ridge, which had been pointed out as their beacon, and the broad river, which was the object of their quest, lay before them.

Sudeeq, to whom all the arrangements of their wanderings had been committed, had decided that their most likely chance of escape was to cross the mountain height, as they had done, making straight for the Indus, in the hope of meeting some boat upon the river, which might facilitate their rescue.

There was a hamlet on the river's bank, to which the path evidently led, where Sudeeq proposed that they should seek refreshment : they had scarcely tasted food of any kind that day ; and, whatever the hazard, their very hunger and

exhaustion compelled them to make the attempt to procure some.

When, however, they were yet two miles distant, Howard, whose weakness was extreme, fell to the ground powerless: human nature could not endure more.

“ Well, Master,” Sudeeq said, in the accents of a man whom hope had deserted, “ it is come to it: we must have food, or we die. I will make the attempt alone. If I come not back successful, be sure I too am sacrificed. But lie you here, where no chance passer-by may find you. If darkness comes, and I return not, 'twill be a dark fate that has come upon us.”

Sudeeq merely waited to see his master placed near by, in the covert of a fragment of rock; and then went on, leaving Howard almost careless of his return; almost wishing to close his eyes on everything of life. Fatigue and want of nourishment, at a time when his feebleness asked for constant support, had told their tale fearfully on him. Large boils had broken out upon his body, which, adding to the torture of his un-

healed wounds, made each step he took perfect agony ; and even his rest on the bare, hard rock, famished and fainting as he was, was luxury to his previous torment.

But Sudeeq did return, and brought with him nourishment, too. He had been successful, beyond probability ; had got a lodgment for the night in a detached hut, which they were to reach at dusk ; for even here, apart and secluded as it seemed from the turmoil of the angry north, the same greedy vengeance was alive to shed the blood of the invaders.

Sudeeq, however, had diverted suspicion of their actual circumstances, and doubted not for their safety. It was, indeed, a boon to Howard's suffering to find a few hours' rest. Sudeeq had made him up a couch of clean, dry ferns, and there he slept, spite of pain and anguish, until the following day had far advanced ; Sudeeq watching, from time to time, close by him.

A better feeling had come with his awakening. Refreshed and recruited, he felt as if he could again pass on ; but Sudeeq bade him keep

quiet, whispered in his ear that he had found a rescue, and would have him rest as long as the interval permitted.

It was long after dusk when he again came. He motioned Howard to rise; and, under plea of breathing the cool night air, led him from the tent. He took him cautiously to the river's side, where, in a little creek below the hamlet, a fisherman's boat was found moored; and, without a word, urged him into it; laying him down on the soft leaves, with which it was thickly strewed.

Sudeeq then quietly undid the moorings, and, pushing off the boat from the bank, let it glide down upon the rapid stream at pleasure, himself crouching by his master's side, as if to prevent all chance of detection; and then, when distance made detection less probable, he took the single oar which lay on the boat's side, and plied it vigorously, as long as his strength permitted him; so that, by the morning, what with the rapid current and his own strenuous exertions, a wide space had been placed between them and pursuit.

And it was not until daylight came, and showed the various provisions Sudeeq had collected together for his comfort, that Howard knew how busily he had spent the time, while he himself slept, to profit by the chance finding of the boat, in aiding their progress and escape.

Night and day did they let their frail barque glide on. The moon was at the full, and gave them light enough to keep the middle of the stream ; or, when they came nigh any village on the banks, to let Sudeeq scull the boat to the opposite side, so as to prevent all needless notice.

But fortune seemed to favour them at last ; excepting their meagre supply of food, which was rapidly being consumed, all things seemed to aid them onward ; and when, on the eighth day, they came up with a cotton-boat, then setting sail for Bombay, they felt as if their rescue was complete.

Howard's increasing feebleness, however, now made each day's delay of consequence ; and glad Sudeeq was to find a favouring breeze, wafting them swiftly on their way to their long sighed-for rest.

From thenceforth, Sudeeq's labours ceased, and his anxiety was now but to keep up his master's spirits, and wile the weary voyage by such anecdotes as occurred to him. He told him, among other details, of his history; his long captivity in a barbarous, cruel land; his rescue from destruction by her, for whose sake all he had suffered to bring Howard safely off was as nothing, to what he would still do to serve her. Declared himself his countryman, forced by the stirring events to feign a disguise, which, from long use, sat easy on him; and, though no longer servant, still was Howard's safety dear as his own life; nor would he be content until he had brought him to her, whose smile would be his own ample reward.

But, spite of every effort which Sudeeq, or, as we should now call him, Newbery, made to amuse the invalid and divert his mind from his ailments, his illness clung stubbornly to him; and each succeeding day but brought increasing feebleness, until, at length, on their arrival at their destination, it was all he could do to crawl from

the landing-place, until a conveyance could be found for his relief.

He was taken to a friend's house, and at once put to bed; and for days knew nothing more—not even that he existed.

At first, Newbery dared not quit him for even a single hour; for it seemed as if life and death were poised so nicely, that a mere breath might decide the issue; and he thought that, perhaps it were as well, should the latter weigh down the scale, to let his fate, his very return, be as a hidden page, no eye might read. But when, as he watched by him, and he had farther time to reflect and judge, he deemed it better prudence to seek advice how to act; and, as we have seen, sought Mr. McGregor for such purpose.

The result has been told.

CHAPTER XV.

Sunshine and showers ! is life not so,
Now smiling joy, now gloom'd by woe ?
One time the glist'ning landscape cheers,
And now the storm, o'ercast with fears,
Sweeps o'er the beautiful, the free :
Say ! is not such mortality ?

MEANWHILE Ada was left, day after day, in doubt and suspense ; of all the trials of poor humanity, that most difficult to bear.

She knew well enough that her father did not remain away from her without some good cause ; saw evidence enough, in his letters, of mystery ; and, in the very uncertainty of his movements, felt satisfied that he must be on the track of tidings, if not actually in possession of them.

And, oh ! the sickening excitement with which she daily watched the arrival of the post ; the trembling eagerness which glanced over each letter that came from him, to see if hope had marked its page ; and the prostrated spirit, when she found it was still but the feeble promise that all would yet be well.

She tried to think of patience ; tried to realize to her mind that every vicissitude which occurred to her did not come by chance, but surely was directed by a hand that delighted in mercy ; by whom every event that happens to every one of His creatures, is surely meant for good—little as our blindness can too often discern it.

She deemed, too, at times, that her trial might be in chastisement. Alas ! who of mortal birth, the purest, the best, is free from the brand of guilt ? And she meekly bowed her thoughts to bear submissively the allotted penalty ; while a strong sense of past mercies and past deliverances tutored her mind to believe that her trials, grievous as their present endurance, would issue in eventual good. And in the very confidence with which she committed her hopes, and *his* safety,

on whom those hopes depended, to a safer keeping than human arm could offer, she found composure, almost peace.

And she would think of her own true, constant affection ; think of what it had cost her—the toil, the pain, the peril : surely, if the purest human sentiment might claim the reward of its devotedness, her love for Howard might put in a small plea for recompense, might claim some exemption from despair.

In thoughts such as these, she would often pass the livelong night, listening for the passing hours, as for the accents of some loved friend, and wondering often that they came so tardily. And yet she knew not why she should wish them to be more brief ; with returning light, came only renewed disappointment, renewed doubt and suspense.

So the days passed—dull, dreary, discontenting. But how much more weary had they been, were it not for Edith James and her constant cheerfulness, which was indeed, as a very wise man memorializes it, “as a perpetual feast unto the soul.” It was the steadiness of the light

which shone in her bright face, that made her cheerfulness so bewitching. Never boisterous in her mirth, never unduly depressed even in her sadness, she was the very companion for one suffering rather under the anticipation of evil, than from its actual infliction.

Edith combatted her fears, suggested hopes, explained hindrances, pointed out probabilities ; in fact, made the case appear as favourable as it was possible to do.

As for kind, dear, bustling Mrs. Burdett, she was the very personification of the good Samaritan, pouring the oil and wine into her wounded spirit. More especially busy was she one morning, shortly afterwards, when they had received a packet of letters from Mr. Greville, announcing his intended return. No doubt he must be an especial favourite to call forth such evident interest, as the good lady's whole appearance declared.

“I am so delighted !” she said, in the midst of her many perambulations that morning, “so very glad papa is coming back ; I do so hope he will make us all right ; sure he has not stayed

all this time for nothing? And now do, my dear child, look your very best, and very cheerfully, 'twill glad papa's heart so," and then aside, ("deal to do to make her look well just now; sadly, sadly changed from the Alice I knew once, with her plump, rosy cheeks—well, well, trouble and trial would blanch any one's cheeks—hope the roses will come back ere long.")

"But tell me, dear soul!" Ada asked, "what says papa to you? his note to me is brevity itself."

"And so is mine, dear, very short, but very pithy—have not time to find it now—(dear me, a thousand things to do, and no time to do them!)"

And off the old lady hurried, to make the most of the space she actually had.

Edith, too, was equally unsatisfactory on the question of Mrs. Burdett's note: she might not, indeed, know what its contents said; but Ada suspected she did, and in her very evasion, took courage in her heart, that at length some good tidings were in store for her.

Oh, blindness to the future, wisely given !—wise was the man that said it!—little did Ada suspect the shock that was in store for her !

How often do the frail children of mortality sail down their smooth stream of life, unforeshadowed by the storm that waits to engulf them ! How often, when the goal of their eager race is nearly won, does some fatal stumbling-stone trip them up ; how much oftener, when the goal is won, is it found unsatisfying !

That following morning, Ada had risen with the early dawn : she knew not that her father would arrive, but it was possible ; and that very possibility kept her on the tenter-hooks of expectation, beyond all idea of rest.

She was not yet dressed, when she became aware of a bustle about the house ; heard the tread of many feet ; the sound of voices ; the opening and shutting of doors, and all the usual concomitants of an arrival. At once she knew it must be her father ; sooner than her most impatient calculation. Did that augur good ?

She listened again ; opened her chamber-

window a little, to peep along the ample verandah, from which almost all the principal rooms of the house, or day or sleeping ones, were lighted.

The entrance-door had been just opened, and a palanquin was carried cautiously in, and, after a moment's pause, taken quietly into the dining-room. Ada knew not why such an association should come to her mind; but it seemed so like as if they had borne a corpse along; so like what she had seen when her mother's lifeless body was carried from its earthly home of love and happiness, to the cold, silent grave, that an icy shudder came over her, which it was difficult to cast off.

Could her father be ill? could he be—no, no, such a desolation surely was not doomed for her!

Edith James slept in the adjoining chamber communicating with hers; she quickly sought and roused her from her slumber.

“Dear me!” Edith said, rubbing her eyes very determinedly, “how you do perplex yourself with needless fears! My dear child!

pray what next, now you have killed poor papa?"

"Do not quiz me, Edith," Ada said, imploringly; "I have known far more sudden blows, in this horrid climate, where illness and death go hand-in-hand."

"Nonsense, child! don't always see the dark side of things; cannot you learn a little wisdom?"

"I do, Edith, and sad it is!"

"Well, well! I'll get up, and soon content your fears; mayhap your papa is tired; I'll soon ascertain," and she promptly commenced her attiring.

"Perhaps it is foolish," Ada said; "but my mind sadly misgives me. Was papa really expected this morning, Edith? now tell me; it is this very mystery which gives rise to my apprehension—you would not say."

"Simply because I *could* not; he *might* be here: no doubt the arrival is papa."

"I dare not seek him," Ada trembled as she spake; "I have a strange presentiment of ill, I cannot conquer."

“After all you have undergone, Ada, to fail at such an ideal fear? What is all that noise now?”

“The bearers are taking the palanquin away;” Ada looked quickly through the opened window; “and oh, joy! joy! there is Walters—and dear papa! talking to the head-bearer. God be praised!”

“There, you naughty girl! said I not that he was well?”

But Ada heard not her words, she had hurried to her own room, and briefly finishing her toilet, hastened to find her father.

Her bed-room led through the library to the dining-room, where she expected to find him: she was soon across the room, heard her father’s voice in the adjoining one, her hand was on the handle of the door, when it was suddenly opened, and he appeared hurriedly and agitated before her.

She rushed into his embrace.

“Dearest—dearest papa!” was all she said, as she hid her face upon the ancient resting-place, trembling, hoping, fearing.

“ My precious child !” the fond parent answered, and kissing her again and again, led her back to her own apartment, “ once more do I hold thee !” He placed her on the sofa, and seating himself beside her, inquired, “ And did you think, my Ada, that I should never return ?”

But Ada answered not ; she looked into his face for a moment, with such an anxious, pleading look, and again hid her face on his bosom. There was little in her brief glance to encourage her to ask what her heart was bursting to know : her father looked pale and haggard, he was as agitated as herself, and in spite of his usual self-command, it was evident that he shrunk from the satisfaction, which he knew his daughter was dying to hear. But that silent appeal left him not the power to pause.

“ I have not been idle, dearest,” he continued.

“ But the result, papa ?” Ada said, impetuously, “ the result ?”

“ Be calm, sweet child,” the father trembled to witness her agitation, “ you give me not the

space to tell it. I have been so far successful as to know that Smythe has escaped the massacre, and that he is safe, but—”

“But what, papa? May I not thank my God for his deliverance?”

“I think so, Ada; we have indeed need to do so. There is no doubt that he was rescued by him they called the Blue Chief, your friend Zulmanie’s lover.”

“Go on, papa; in mercy tell me all.”

“But wounded, almost to the death, and scorning the protection of a treacherous foe, he cast himself on his own resources, and escaped alone.”

“Just like Howard, just like his own impious spirit; but did you say *alone*, papa?”

“Alone, so far as the chief could succour him, he was accompanied by a faithful servant, one Sudeeq.”

“Sudeeq, say you? Then Howard is safe!” and Ada’s face lighted up with joy and content as she said it; “unless both perish, no peril can touch him.”

“Arrived at length at a British station, poor

Smythe sunk under his trials, and a long and dangerous illness succeeded."

"But he is recovered, papa? I see it in your bright look; and *where* is he, dearest papa? Do, do let me know!"

"Be composed, my child, you shall know all. Your father, Ada, has been nursing him at Bombay."

"Good God! is it possible? Say, my own dear papa, that he is recovered; look me in the face, that I may read the full assurance of the truth."

"Yes, Ada, he is now mending rapidly."

"And may I see him, papa? You are come to fetch me—oh! that smile says you are! Thank you, thank you!"

"Stay, stay, my own dear child, you get on rather too fast; he is scarcely fit to see you yet, or, indeed, to be seen by you: he is wofully altered, if he were the handsome man they tell me he was—I am not quite sure the young lady might like such a pale, sickly-looking lover."

"Let me go to him, papa—do let me, papa.

Be sure 'twill do him good ; and it will be every blessing and peace to poor Ada. Do not say nay."

" You shall, my love ; but you would be greatly shocked, Ada—you will not know your lover."

" Not know him, papa ! Poor Howard ! he must be indeed changed, if Ada knew him not ! But *when* may we go, papa ?—this very evening ?" She dropped from his embrace, and kneeling on the ground beside him, looked up from his knees as she leant upon them, and said imploringly, " Do, my own dearest papa, let it be this very evening."

" Well, well, my love, we will see ; but you are scarcely able, Ada, to undertake the journey : you still look very delicate."

" I shall soon be better, papa. If I might but see him, and know that he is recovering, I should ail nothing. Let us go."

" Suppose he were to come to you, my love ?"

" What, papa ?"

“ Suppose we brought him to Poonah, my child ?”

“ Is it possible !”

Ada sprung from the ground as she spoke ; and, before her father was conscious of what she did, rushed from the room.

“ Ada ! Ada !” Mr. Greville in vain attempted to bring her back ; “ my dear child !”

But long before he could, in his utter surprise, even attempt to detain her, she had disappeared. He caught, indeed, a glimpse of her dress as she passed into the dining-room : there was then a scream, a sudden rush, and all was still.

Mr. Greville followed after her in the greatest possible alarm. He had just before seen Howard carried into the room, and laid on a sofa ; and he dreaded to both the effects of the sudden shock. He hurried into the room, and found his daughter locked in her lover’s arms, abandoned to an ecstasy, too exquisite for words.

“ God bless you, my children,” he said, fer-

vently, " and make you as happy in each other as your affection deserves !"

" Say as one deserves, my dear Sir," Howard said, and his voice trembled with emotion as he said it ; " and that one deserves more than a life of devotedness could pay !"

CHAPTER XVI.

The sun shines brightly ; the pellucid sky
Gladdens the eye, that looks, enrapt, on high ;
Joying to see, in its pure lucidness,
The type of things were wont the heart to bless :
But, see ! that cloud on farthest ocean rising !—

THAT following day was all brightness ; the clouds and mists that gloomed the cheerful day had passed by, and all was gaiety and light-hearted joy. The night shone so cheerily, that it seemed as the very noon tide to the thoughts of those, who, too happy to sleep, lay awake to commune with their souls on restored happiness.

Oh ! the happy faces, the light hearts that met together that ensuing evening ! It was

one scene of congratulations and endless good wishes.

Howard's pale, sickly face, indeed, and the frequent pangs which his unhealed wounds gave him, sometimes dimmed the lustre of his smile, and caused a sigh from one who watched his every expression with the fondest interest; but still he was cheerful—felt that a blessed lot like his could bear some little foil.

As for Ada, she was too happy; the very excess of her joy was painful to her; and she failed yet to believe, or at least to feel all its reality. She would start again and again—ay, even in the midst of the blessedness around her!—as if from some deep trance, and ask herself; were doubt, and suspense, and peril, really no longer impending over her—was all this full content, indeed, no dream?

And when the night came, she could not sleep for very ecstasy. She vainly sought to tutor her mind to its happier circumstances; to feel that hope and joy, as the twin morning stars of her destiny, shone with that pure, clear light upon her soul.

But she did learn it in time—in fact, sadly, too, much as its first lesson was oppressive with the exuberance of bliss.

Alas ! no state of human existence, however blessed, is free from alloy ; the cup of earthly felicity is ever a mingled one, or we should drink it to forgetfulness of all better rest.

Howard's amendment came tardily on ; seemed to mock the most skilful advice, the most anxious care ; yea, though it were as if an angel bound up his wounds ; and surely it was something more than mere human agency, that patient solicitude which watched his every look, and anticipated his wishes, with a gentleness and affection that made his illness, which had won him the privilege, a very delight to him ! Howard, at least, thought so ; and, in the soothing kindness and cheering smiles that beamed on him, found the best alleviation of his sufferings.

Often would he think of the past, and turn away with shame and contrition, as certain selfish, calculating passages occurred to him of neglect—ay ! he knew it well enough—of forgetfulness of one, whose devotedness of heart

shamed the unworthy thought which had slighted her love, and made an attachment, not often chronicled for intensity, a mere convenience by which to advance his sordid views. Yes, well might he thank his kindly fate, that had made the unchanging, constant love of one true heart, his salvation from destruction, the earnest of future happiness. Could he have done otherwise than dearly love her? She had saved his life; had made that life one promise of joy; was the hourly balm and solace, the true mediciner of his sufferings—could he indeed have failed to love her—if not for herself, surely for her kindness?

And long and anxious was the need of her attentions, for his recovery still lingered, at times seemed to defeat their care. There were those who shook their heads and said it never would be recovery; that his long neglect and privations had undermined his constitution, that it could not rally. Nor was it any unwise judgment that said it; but Ada knew not that. She was left to her own better hopes, that promised, assured the result as she wished it.

It soon, however, became evident, that even the cooler climate of the hills, was too relaxing and enervating for the invalid, and a very early removal to his native land was strongly urged by the medical attendant.

It needed not more to decide their immediate movements, though it was a sad breaking up of ties which, however strangely woven, held far too firmly to bear patiently such sudden disruption : Edith James was inexorable in her regrets, vowed all kinds of determined purposes of reunion ; would coax her father at once to give up his appointment, and make his future sojourning near Ada's ; for Edith James she was, and Edith James she would ever be, and her most true devoted friend. Much as she had seen in the latter experience of Ada's attachment to prize—and there were passages which, as she had admitted, she did indeed envy her the feeling—she waivered not from her resolves, still abused the sex with as hearty good-will and despite as ever, and continued to do so unto her life's end.

And there were other regrets, as sincere and quite as hearty. Good Mrs. Burdett was espe-

cially loud in the expression of her sorrow at the prospect of losing them. Her attachment, like Edith's, was of the right sort; none of your unmeaning profession, so common in this treacherous world, that puts on the flimsy mask of words to hide the empty lie, that eats them even as they are spoken—nought of this, but the true, genuine, unuttered kindness, proved in deeds, that speak better words than mouth ever spake, honest though it might be—and bid you ware profession as a fraud.

Her “dear me's!” and her smiles were very plentiful on the occasion—and Mr. Greville, who had become a great favourite with her, to the supplanting of dear Mr. M., who, since George Maitland's return home, had seemed somewhat estranged from her—never failed to soothe the good lady's regrets, and express his hopes that their friendship might be a continuing one.

There had been many private conferences between him and his daughter; and one day, after a lengthy conversation between them, in which Howard also was made a party, Ada

sought Mrs. Burdett, evidently for some determined purpose.

She found her, busy of course, but alone—so far well.

“Now, my dear, good Mrs. Burdett,” Ada said, and kissed her very affectionately, “I want you to listen to me, really—never mind that eternal work, but for once—”

“Well, young lady! what have you to say? (Can’t work and hear, I suppose, humph!)” this latter was an aside.

“It is about our plans.”

“Very sorry to lose you dear, very; though I hope we shall meet again soon. I do love you truly, child!”

“I am sure you do, dear, kind soul, and hope you always will, and papa says—”

“Sorry to lose him too, my child, he is such a nice, cheerful companion—quite won my heart, (supplanted dear Mr. M.) so very considerate, so unselfish, and I do like that, Ada.”

“And I am sure papa equally likes you.”

“I am right glad to hear that, dear (nice to be appreciated).”

“Were you very happy as a married woman?”
Ada put the question rather abruptly.

“Not very, my dear; Burdett had no congenial soul, was morose and taciturn; I talked too much, made him peevish. Why do you ask, Ada?”

“I have often wondered that you have never been tempted to marry again.”

“How do you know, child, that I have ever had the option? a woman cannot well propose (sometimes 'tis done: that bold widow Scott did it—but nobody valued her afterwards). How do you know I have had the option, child?”

“I will be bound you have.”

“Well, say I have, what then? I have not felt sufficient interest to give up my present freedom, and barter real good for any uncertain promise, (father confessor, peccavi, all that sort of thing).”

“But now, suppose the case had been otherwise, how had it been then? do you object to second marriages?”

“Object child! surely not. I am a creature of sympathy—must love something, and if I had

not had a child to love, perhaps should have sought another partner. I, think that true happiness is only to be found in married life, and pity the unfortunate who is debarred from it (speci-ally the willow ones—poor George M. sadly infatuated—never marry at all).”

“ Now don’t be offended, dear soul ; but I want to know whether it would be too late to persuade you to change your condition, sup-posing any very desirable party were to urge it ?”

“ I marry again, child, at my time of life ? old woman that I am ! (forty-five, if a day ; no chicken, truly;) why, Ada, you must be mock-ing me.”

“ No, in good truth, I am in earnest, and I ask for such a nice, dear, lovable old gentleman, who would make you so happy, and whom I know you could not help loving.”

“ Nonsense, Ada, nonsense ; you do but jest with your ancient friend (what an old fool to think of wedlock, indeed ! think of the grave, rather). And pray, young lady, who is the aspirant to such an unworthy honour ?”

“But first say that you will listen kindly ; such being the terms on which alone I can betray my secret.”

(“Then after all,” the aside came first, “it is more than banter). Well ! say I will listen, kindly, as you say.”

“Such a *very* dear man—to my mind, the dearest, kindest heart, God ever gave to man ; cannot you guess—not even yet ?”

“No, indeed, no—ah ! impossible, and yet—”

“Yes, yes ; you know I mean my papa, who else could it be ? who kinder, dearer, more lovable ?”

“No one, my dear child ; but, indeed, you distress me ;” a tear stood in the good lady’s eye as she spoke.

Ada threw her arms round her neck, and fondly kissed her.

“And will you not be my dear mama ? Yes ! yes ! say that you will, dear, kind friend, bid me call you by a name, to me as yet unknown, and make us happy.”

Mrs. Burdett pressed her silently to her bosom :

“ No one, dearest Ada,” she at length said, “ could more effectually influence my consent ; no suit have been so well pleaded as by your own sweet self ; but, indeed, it is a serious question.”

“ Say that I may call you mama ; do not send me away with a disappointed heart.”

“ I am afraid I cannot deny you, dear Ada.”

“ My own dearest mama ! a thousand thanks !” and Ada seemed to add almost as many kisses.

“ And certainly,” Mrs. Burdett continued, “ if there be any motive could decide my consent, it would be the privilege of calling you daughter, to know I may still live within the reach of your affection, for it is very, very dear to me, Ada. (Awake, Esther ! awake ! surely, thou art dreaming, woman !”)

“ And may I tell papa ?” Ada asked, abruptly staying the good lady’s asides.

"It would be mere affectation, my child, to refuse."

"Thank you, thank you, for a kind, dear soul that you are," and with another kiss, she hurried from the room.

And then the asides were very busy:

"Is it possible, an old woman like I ? dreaming, I say—a very fool—insane ! Dear Ada Greville ! to think how fondly I have loved that girl ! And her papa ! never saw one man I ever took such a liking to, not even dear Mr. M., and he—. Well ! well ! such things are made up in heaven, no doubt ; we, but the clay in the hands of the potter, sail down the stream of one's destiny, et cetera."

Mr. Greville had pressed that the marriage should take place before their departure, that she might accompany them to England ; but this was impracticable in Mrs. Burdett's view of the matter from the very brief space now left to them, and it was arranged that she should follow by the next Overland, and that both weddings should take place together.

And a very, very affectionate parting took

place among them all, and quantities of regrets, that even any intervening space should separate them.

And there were still more regrets ; poor Maria was almost heart-broken, to part for ever, from one who had proved so true a friend—the saviour of her earthly happiness ; a feeling, too, in which Newbery well partook : who, now placed in a position of the highest trust and confidence, had every promise of content and peace for the future.

Still other regrets, too—poor Golab, whom Mr. McGregor's prompt measures had very fortunately arrested before he had left Kurrachee, was perfectly in despair to lose his mistress, and begged and proposed a score of improbable arrangements for his accompanying her ; it was in vain she urged the claims of his family :

“ All nothing to Missie ; Niacum nobody ; little Golabs, and he had a pair, nobody to Missie. Would send writing for judge, to make them comfortable, and would serve Missie plenty much, as long as live.”

It took, indeed, much pains to reconcile the

faithful creature to the separation. It was, indeed, only the hope of some plan being thought of for bringing him to England, when Mr. James himself returned, that soothed his present regret. The writing he did not get, for Edith had arranged for him to attend her on her rejoining her father, and would herself see to his due reward; while the substantial benefits conferred on him by the gratitude of those he had so mainly benefitted, left him almost independent of other kindness.

And the poor fellow, in the sequel, attained his earnest wish. On his return to Chittore, he found his domestic arrangements a little changed. Niacum had little brooked her husband's long-continued absence, and had taken herself and one of the young Golabs, to some other mate, beyond all trace that he could make of her; not that the search, perhaps, was very effective; and so, consoling himself, like many other wronged husbands have done, as well as he could, Golab was allowed, with the little Mahmoud, to accompany Mr. James to England, within a year of Ada's departure, to become one of her household, and

pass the remainder of his days in the midst of kindness and unvarying consideration.

The day of their departure had arrived, and a very hecatomb of blessings accompanied it; amid which, one early May morning, the party embarked on board the 'Victory,' a fine new vessel, on their return to happy England.

Ada ceased not to gaze on the receding shore as long as it was visible, and think under what widely different circumstances she had approached it. A lonely wanderer then, cast on the chance sympathy of strangers; separated from country, from home, from love; all in doubt and jeopardy; trouble and doubt, that was her burthen then.

Now—oh, it was indeed a joyous contrast!—surrounded by those she dearly loved, her existence one of devotedness, which knew not how sufficiently to speak its entireness; returning to all the dear associations of her childhood, with the hope, the human certainty of happiness, the full reward of her trials. Could Ada have failed to feel all the blessedness of her lot?

The tear of grateful rapture trembled in her

eye, as the whole circumstances of the change occurred to her; and no sooner had the vessel cleared the harbour, and rounded the Malabar Point, than, silently withdrawing to her cabin, she fell on her knees, and offered up her thanksgivings to that merciful Providence, who had thus ordered the perilous events of her pilgrimage to her ultimate welfare.

CHAPTER XVII.

There, there ! stitch them well together,
And they will brave both wind and weather ;
Reckless the storm and tempest breath,
Together cling e'en to the death.

IT was a prosperous, happy voyage ; for favouring breezes and fair weather, blessed hopes and joyous promises wafted them homeward ; and, even on the unstable ocean, they felt peace and content, such as had been long banished from their breasts.

The sea air, too, and the cooler climate, had a most invigorating effect on Howard's feebleness, and his daily improvement soon terminated all anxiety on his account.

It would have been sad, indeed, had all the care and nursing, the beaming smiles, and the tender love, which waited on him, failed of such a result.

No doubt, the perfect peace, the assurance of the happy future, contributed to his restoration, equally with all the appliances for his bodily succour.

With what delight and thankfulness did Ada see the white cliffs of her native land, once more fringing the distant horizon ! Could she forget the desolation of her thoughts, when her last glimpse parted from the green sea-girt isle ! Her helplessness—her almost hopelessness : the doubt of the untried rest !

“And would you believe it, Howard,” she was seated by his side, watching the advancing cliffs, on an evening as calm and beautiful as her own thoughts, and the hand which lay in his pressed it fondly as she spoke, “would you believe, that I even doubted your love ? I, who was sacrificing everything for your dear sake, doubted the rock on which I had placed the anchor of my hope.”

“Indeed, dearest,” Howard answered, smiling, “it was not very consistent, I will allow;” and then a blush came to his brow, as he added, “but the doubt was true, Ada, and had it led you to discard the reprobate—”

“Hush!” Ada quickly put her hand to his lips. “Love me, Howard—but love me as you do now—constant, as my own idolatry—true, as the stream of love, that with the life, feeds my heart to make me more capable of loving you, and I am content.”

“Trust me, dearest, well; if I fail you—”

“No vows, Howard: there were plenty of them when—I won’t be too explicit.”

“You hit me fairly, dearest; it shall be vows no more.”

“I am quite content. Look on that glorious sunset! ’twas on such an evening that yon white cliffs parted from me—surely, the intervening pilgrimage is but a dream!”

“Think you really so, Ada?”

“Not when I look on you, dearest Howard, and feel the fond hand that presses mine so lovingly,—it soon awakens me to the happier truth.”

“God bless thee!”

It was morning when they reached Southampton; they proceeded at once to the metropolis, where Mr. Greville fully expected to find Mrs. Burdett already arrived, and Howard looked to meet with his father at their town mansion. Neither of which expectations, however, were doomed to be: no tidings had reached Mrs. Burdett's brother, at whose house it had been arranged that Mr. Greville should seek her, nor was Lord Staveley in town.

Howard, therefore, hurried down to the country to apprise his father of his arrival, and bring him on to Manor Park to the wedding, which had been long promised for the tenth day after their reaching England.

Among other calls during their stay in town, they made a visit to Mr. Stones, to redeem the diamonds Ada had left with him.

They found him in the same imperturbable state as when Ada had made her previous visit, totally unconscious of herself and her object in calling on him, until the redoubtable voucher

was presented, when he leisurely referred to his books, and, in the course of a few minutes, placed the case before them.

The following Saturday saw Mr. Greville and his daughter on their way to their long-parted home. It was evening when they arrived: a calm, placid evening it was, such as their own thoughts might have typified.

Triumphant arches had been erected in the neighbouring village; banners and devices greeted them on their arrival at the park-gates. The carriage drove rapidly down the avenue; but neither father nor daughter spoke, they seemed lost in deepest reverie; they might think—one, indeed, did think of their last drive up that avenue—they were silent then for very wretchedness and anguish; they spake not now, for that their hearts were too full of grateful joy to let them speak. The old Hall burst suddenly on their sight; their eyes met; each saw the tear that trembled in the eye of the other, and knew it was the tear of unmixed happiness.

"It is worth all the suffering, papa," Ada said, affectionately kissing him, "to know the ecstasy of this moment."

"God grant," her father answered, "that it may be but the beginning of happy feelings, which life alone may decease! and the chastening hand, which has pressed so heavily on the past, fall lightly on the future!"

"And never, never touch my dear—my good papa!"

As the carriage drew up at the hall-door, a loud shout of welcome burst on their ears; they looked quickly round; the entrances and terraces were crowded with the tenantry and servants, wishing to pay honour to their kind landlord and master by a hearty welcome; and warm were the huzzahs that greeted their alighting once more on the threshold of their home.

And there was old, silly nurse, crying like a very child, for joy, and shouting with the best of them; and then, barely waiting for Ada's passing into the hall, rushing up to her, and hugging her in her arms, as if she was fairly beside herself. And there was Edwards, too,

smirking, and blushing, and looking very matronly, having, in fact, taken James, the late groom, to be her husband during Mr. Greville's absence. And then to see nurse, as she took a long survey of her foster-child—oh! it was a happy day for her, that had brought her back, as blooming and beautiful as ever.

“Now let me die!” she said, fervently, “since I have seen that blessed face once more!”

“Nay, nay, dear nurse!” Ada said, kindly, “far better live and love me still.”

“How could you leave us so, dearest? Poor nurse has never known an hour's peace since then.”

“But seen plenty of omens, nurse, I am sure: any more white owls?”

“Ah, Miss Ada, but the desolation came!”

Ada smiled; she knew old nurse's deeply-rooted superstition, and let it be.

She followed her, and saw the many proofs of her great care of the old hall, her jealousy lest any innovation should come near it, where everything was so associated in her mind with the

olden time, and her long attachment to the family. With what pride did she take down Ada's canary, which, though forgetful enough of her mistress, showed plainly that he had not suffered from any want of care in her absence. And then, when she came to Ada's own chamber ; it was, indeed, with exultation that she ushered her mistress in, and showed everything exactly as she had left it fifteen months before—everything, to the untouched bed, whereon she had lain the night of her flight. Ada's heart swelled with grateful pleasure.

“ And is this, too, your thought, dear nurse ? ”

Her father answered her ; he had followed unperceived, to enjoy her surprize :

“ Not quite, my own sweet child, not quite ! But take them away now, nurse ; clear all off ; let not one sad thought dim the bridal gladness.”

“ Not yet, papa,” Ada said, earnestly ; “ let me look on them once more, while I think of the mercies which have accompanied me since we parted fellowship ; they will be monitors

between me and my God, of error and mercy ; of peril and deliverance. Yes, yes ! I had need look on them and be thankful !”

The second day, after their return, Lord Stavely and his son arrived at the Hall. Ada was not slightly agitated at the thought of an introduction to her future father-in-law ; so while Mr. Greville received his Lordship in one room, Howard joined her in another, and then led her, blushing and trembling, to his father.

The old man gazed, with surprize and pleasure, on the beautiful creature who presented herself—Ada, indeed, never looked more lovely, and in a perfect rapture of admiration, saluted her most enthusiastically.

“ My boy had need be perverse,” he said ; “ with such an excuse as this, might well run away from all authority. Why, Howard, boy, you never told me she was half so beautiful !”

“ I told you she was good, father, and loved your unworthy son with a devotedness that shames the best return I can ever make her.”

“ So you say, boy, yet you know there is small love lost between you—well, well, may you

always love, at least, not less ; and harkye, Howard, if you do not make this fair creature happy, I'll hate you, that's all."

" I'll give you leave, father—to curse me too if I do not !"

The very night, before the bridal day, a parcel arrived for the bride : it announced Mrs. Burdett's arrival : had been sent expressly for the wedding, from Ramasamy — a most exquisite Cashmere shawl, such as eyes had never gazed on before for beauty, and so appropriate in design for the occasion. The old man had sent it as an acknowledgment for her successful advocacy in the great law case.

And Ada wore it at her bridal,— a most becoming addition to her *trousseau*. Her beauty, indeed, and her grace would have set off any dress; but when she appeared in the splendour of her loveliness, vying with the sparkling diamonds that glittered on her person ; and her whole attire, so chaste, so exquisite ; no wonder that the old Lord should be in such transports : no wonder that the bridegroom should gaze on her in silent rapture and yield her his soul's homage.

Nothing could be more calm and composed than the bride's demeanour; agitated she was, impressed with the full solemnity of the holy vow she came to take: but there was no affectation about her: she had no thought to play a part, no mind for any display: she came to be united to the man of her heart, on whose truth and love she could fearlessly have trusted her salvation, and there was not in her thoughts one doubt, one fear, one hesitation; all was content, joy, confidence.

And when she repeated the solemn oath that bound her to him, for better, for worse, for richer, for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love, cherish, and to obey; there was a clearness, a firmness, a devotedness in her enunciation, that declared for her that the recording angel might safely register her vow, among such as never would be broken, in that blessed chronicle, whereon good spirits love to look.

Our history speaks not of the rejoicings which celebrated the happy event; and in which, old nurse, casting aside all omens and sadder portents, danced and shouted with the best and

youngest of them : ours is now to briefly follow those, in whom principally we have interested our readers, in their after progress.

It was after a tour of several weeks that the bridal pair returned to Manor Park. Mr. Greville had already brought his bride home, and their new mama greeted them with all the tenderness of a much older affection ; right good, kind-hearted creature that she was, no one could have done it better.

And a happy, blessed reunion it was for them all ; after the buffets and turmoils of the stormy past, to find themselves at rest in such a harbour of perfect peace.

Thenceforth, dividing their time as equally as could be, between their respective families—for old Lord Staveley was as tenacious of his new daughter's society as her own father could be—Ada's married days were as one sunny beam of love and blessedness.

Howard, indeed, kept well his word, and by a life of devoted affection and unchanging kindness, sought, as far as he could, to repay a part of that debt, which he felt might never be quite satisfied.

Secure in that one confidence, the stream of Ada's life went smoothly, happily, contentedly on. She had her trials, indeed, and her disappointments—it would not have been human nature had such not been; but she could ever pillow her cares on her husband's bosom, and in his sympathy find consolation and relief. *There* was her rest: the very after-ties which came to rivet their love, had it been possible more fondly, were but another link in that firm chain, against which all the storms and tempests of an angry world, had such come rudely, would have beaten in vain.

There Ada had her full recompense for bygone endurance—the perfect reward of her Woman's Constancy.

THE END.

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